INTRODUCING THE TOP 3 SMEs IN MALAYSIA

TURN TO PAGES 4–9 FOR MORE DETAILS
6 KEY LESSONS FROM GLOBAL LEADERS ON BETTER LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

By ETHAN GANES
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE DoGood Leadership Conference and Malaysian Leadership Summit (MLS), held on May 5 and May 7, 2018, respectively saw global speakers, writers and coaches bring their professional experience to both corporate and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). With the aim to bring better leadership and change, this group of people took their life learnings to cover topics from the fundamentals of an organisation, to handling an unpredictable disruptive era. We explore six key elements shared in the events, and my personal key takeaways from some of the speakers.

1. THE FUNDAMENTALS
   Everything that is built to last begins with a solid foundation, be it for the leader or the organisation.
   - Scott Friedman, certified speaking professional and motivational humourist
   - Having the right mindset goes a long way.
   - Friedman shares, “Know your objectives, and then you can make your choices.”
   - A well-founded knowledge of your objective is crucial because it acts as a measure for your decision-making. If it does not match the objective, it is not the choice you want to make.
   - Roshan Thiran, Leaderonomics chief executive officer
   - Clarity is one of the most important aspects of leadership. Roshan shares two kinds of clarity:
     - Vision clarity: To know exactly what it is you would like to achieve as an organisation.
     - Reality clarity: To know exactly where the organisation stands.
   - Instead of saying, “We are a developing organisation”, a clearer approach would be “We are an organisation currently in ‘x’ phase.”
   - Combining these two types of clarity will set a steady foundation for progress.

2. SPREADING THE WORD
   - Publicity is key, but what about organisations with smaller budgets?
   - Debra Fine, author and small talk expert
   - It begins with the word of mouth. Fine shares how small talk is an underutilised form of sharing one’s work.
   - She says, “You can know someone for years only to suddenly find out they ran an NGO.”
   - Fine suggests sharing snippets of your feelings and recent activities related with your organisation when you’re asked, “How are you?”
   - For example, “I’m feeling great! I just recently secured some funding for my NGO!”
   - Sliding these snippets into your small talk allows you to let people know your organisation exists. You can then start a conversation around it.

3. BUILDING THE TEAM
   - Teamwork makes the dream work, but what makes the most effective team?
   - Rebecca Morgan, author and international consultant
   - Extracting and analysing data from Google’s Project Aristotle research, Morgan talks about the importance of psychological safety.
   - She says, “The team must feel safe to take risks, make mistakes and share ideas.”
   - Psychological safety is “a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject or punish someone for speaking up.”
   - This environment will lead to teams becoming more innovative, open and engaged.
   - This can be fostered by:
     - 1. Focusing on the conversation
        - When someone is sharing, make it a point to actively listen. This means putting aside all electronic devices for the time being to show care for the person’s ideas.
     - 2. Asking questions
        - When there is a gap in an idea, instead of outrightly pointing it out, approach it differently.
        - For example, “That’s an interesting idea. What do you think about...?” and then include the area of concern.
        - This allows the person to feel credited for the idea and an opportunity to mull over an area of improvement.

4. HOWDY, PARTNER?
   - All partnerships are challenging.
   - How’s here’s how to make the best of both worlds between NGO and corporate partners:
     - “It is harder for NGOs to maintain sustainable partnerships. We need to start clarifying what partnerships mean based on context.” — Kishore Ravuri, founder of Impacto Sdn Bhd
   - Friedman shares, “Know your objectives, and then you can make your choices.”
   - A well-founded knowledge of your objective is crucial because it acts as a measure for your decision-making. If it does not match the objective, it is not the choice you want to make.

5. DISRUPTION
   - How are you navigating the Fourth Industrial Revolution?
   - It is important to understand that disruption is not chaos. It is something that challenges the current way of thinking. It is innovative in nature and is a quest for the better.
   - Paul N Larsen, certified executive coach and leadership consultant
   - Disruption is something that we need to accept. Larsen suggests asking ourselves this question: “What do I need to disrupt to reach my next level of fulfillment?”
   - This essentially means expecting and utilizing disruption in our thought process. Once a growth plateau is reached, it is time to begin adding disruption.

6. DEALING WITH DISRUPTION
   - How are you navigating the Fourth Industrial Revolution?
   - It is important to understand that disruption is not chaos. It is something that challenges the current way of thinking. It is innovative in nature and is a quest for the better.
   - Paul N Larsen, certified executive coach and leadership consultant
   - Disruption is something that we need to accept. Larsen suggests asking ourselves this question: “What do I need to disrupt to reach my next level of fulfillment?”
   - This essentially means expecting and utilizing disruption in our thought process. Once a growth plateau is reached, it is time to begin adding disruption.

Starting Young is a column featuring stories written by individuals who have been a part of Leaderonomics Youth, our community arm which focuses on developing youths through various leadership initiatives.

Ethan is a die-hard believer in transcending comfort zones. Ever since his Leaderonomics journey began with DoGood, challenges have become learning opportunities. Were you there at these events, too? Would you like to partner with us to in some of our youth initiatives? Find out how you can join in our young generation of leaders by writing to youth@leaderonomics.com.

Or, if you would like to partner with us in some of our DoGood Volunteer initiatives, please email to dogood@leaderonomics.com.

www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 26 May 2018

Like this article? Follow us @leaderonomics on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

In this podcast, we discuss how volunteerism and community involvement play a role in your leadership success journey, while you’re on a career break or waiting for the next thing to come your way, invest your time in volunteering in a cause you believe in. Listen it here: bit.ly/RYGvolunteer

A group photo for the album...
By ROSHAN THIRAN

On May 10, 2018, it dawned on me that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, 92, would be the oldest Prime Minister in the world, having sworn in as Malaysia’s 7th Prime Minister after having won the historic 14th general election.

Then, I started thinking of another ruler who has had longevity and a significant impact, too, who just witnessed her own grandson’s royal wedding last Saturday.

I recall having dinner with a friend from the United Kingdom (UK) last year. As we were dining, he started telling me about his encounter with the Queen of England and her consort.

My friend had the privilege to speak at a church where the Queen attended and so he was invited to spend the weekend at the Queen’s royal residence.

He was filled with amazing stories of how wonderful and hospitable both the Queen and her consort were and how they spend time listening and learning from him.

Immediately after our meal, I started reading about the Queen and I was amazed how many leadership lessons I gathered from her life.

BACKGROUND

In Feb 1952, a young princess was in the midst of planning an official visit to Australia with her husband when the news struck that her father—King George VI of Great Britain (born Sir Frederick Arthur George)—had died.

Upon hearing of the King’s death while in Kenya, Princess Elizabeth (born Elizabeth Alexandra Mary) found herself in the premature position of becoming Queen Elizabeth II.

George VI had been known as ‘The Reluctant King,’ after ascending the throne in 1936 following the abdication of his brother, formerly King Edward VIII, when Edward married divorced American socialite Wallis Simpson.

Even when George VI was King, the young Elizabeth was named the heir presumptive and her mother the heir apparent, as the possibility of a male heir to the throne was still open.

As fate would have it, at the age of 25, Elizabeth (born in 1926) found herself in the midst of grief, thrust into the global spotlight as she became the Queen.

On her return home, she was greeted by her first Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, before returning to her home, Clarence House, where the Royal Standard was flown for the first time of her reign.

Although it must have been an overwhelming shock to have been made the Queen following her father’s unexpected death, Queen Elizabeth II carried the weight of her calling with graceful aplomb.

LIFETIME COMMITMENT

Philip Ziegler, author of George VI: The Dutiful King, describes the Queen as having “a crippling sense of duty,” and it was a duty she committed herself to fulfilling for the rest of her life.

As the world’s current longest-reigning living monarch, she has enjoyed a positive public image in Britain and throughout the Commonwealth nations.

It’s partly due to her extraordinary ability to balance respecting traditions and customs with creating a reign that leads the way in embracing modern life and social change.

Along with her consort, the Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip (whom she married in 1947), the Queen has been proactive throughout her reign in lending her patronage to over 600 charities, military associations and public service organisations.

Since the time of her coronation, she has taken on public service work seriously and continuously to keep a thriving daily schedule.

One display of her commitment to serving the public came during the Second World War, when she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service, training alongside other British women to become an expert mechanic and driver.

In her weekly, confidential meetings with her Prime Ministers throughout the years, the Queen has been known to be a great source of wisdom and reassurance.

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair has said that, “She has a huge fund of stories and history to draw upon... the accumulated amount of experience and knowledge is incomparable and very valuable for whoever is Prime Minister.”

If her father was ‘The Reluctant King,’ it could be said that the then Princess Elizabeth became ‘The Unexpected Queen,’ certainly in terms of how early she assumed the role.

Nevertheless, she took on the role with a calm and firm leadership that has stood the test of time for 69 years and counting.

Here are four leadership lessons I learnt from researching the extraordinary life of the Queen.

1. BE ADAPTABLE AND EMBRACE CHANGE

When the Queen ascended the throne in 1952, she overruled the original decision to have the ceremony broadcast on radio, insisting that her coronation at Westminster Abbey be televised.

Despite advice from Churchill to stick with convention, the Queen was keen to make use of new media at the time, partly as a measure to modernise the monarchy and connect with her people.

As it turned out, her decision proved to be a popular one among the public, as many got a glimpse at one of the world’s most historic ceremonies.

Queen Elizabeth II was also one of the first heads of state to send an email in 1976.

Today, social media plays a significant role in connecting people to the monarchy and its engagements.

What about us? As leaders in our organisations, are we willing to try new things?

Are we willing to be adaptable and learn new ways to get things done?

The Queen led the way in being innovative. Likewise, as leaders, we need to lead the way.

2. KEEP CALM AND BE A LEADER!

During the Queen’s reign—which has included 13 Prime Ministers, seven Popes, and about a quarter of all American Presidents—she has witnessed and endured challenges both on a personal and national scale.

However, the Queen is famous for her quiet stoicism and unyielding spirit, and exemplifies courage and diligence.

In the aftermath of the July 7, 2005 terrorist bombings of London’s public transport system, she addressed the countries in a call for everyone to stand together in the face of adversity, saying, “Atrocities such as these simply reinforce our sense of community, our humanity and our trust in the rule of law.”

Queen Elizabeth II was also almost called for her to abdicate her position when Edward married divorced American socialite Wallis Simpson.

However, she remains fully committed to the lifegoo she took, and continues to keep hundreds of engagements, as well as providing her support for many charity organisations and associations.

What about us? Do we keep the commitments we make?

Do we do the work people lead? Are we persevering towards the goals and vision we set to achieve?

3. ALWAYS ASK QUESTIONS

Interestingly, the Queen has a very inquisitive and curious mind.

When she is out meeting Prime Ministers or members of the public, she constantly asks a lot of questions. My friend from the UK noted how she bombarded him with many questions.

Great leaders always ask more questions than give answers.

Questions change the world, not answers.

What about us? Or do you spend more time giving answers? The better way to find out about a situation is to ask questions—and then listen.

4. HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE AND BE COMMITTED TO IT

In her coronation speech on her 21st birthday, the Queen stated, “Before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.”

She set the vision at that age, and with a sense of great duty, has fully committed to a lifelong responsibility.

Over the years, some people have called for her to abdicate her position and make way for her son, Prince Charles (born Charles Philip Arthur George).

However, she has remained fully committed to the lifelong oath she took, and continues to keep hundreds of engagements, as well as providing her support for many charity organisations and associations.

What about us? Do we keep the commitments we make?

Do we do the work people lead? Are we persevering towards the goals and vision we set to achieve?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As a nonagenarian, Her Majesty continues her leadership steadfastly as a focus for national identity, unity and pride.

Her presence in the monarchy gives a sense of stability and continuity, a vital element in nation-building.

To her, age seems to be just a number!

Age is just a number!

As the Queen is still working full-time on her 90th birthday, the Queen stated, “If I have one wish it is for the future of the Commonwealth.”

As we were dining, he started telling me about his encounter with the Queen of England and her consort.

Immediately after our meal, I started reading about the Queen and I was amazed how many leadership lessons I gathered from her life.
By CHRISTIE CHUA

AmBank Group chairman, Tan Sri Azman, (fourth from left) and Yap (second from right) with the Top 3.

WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!

THE CULMINATION OF A LONG JOURNEY

Last September, AmBank introduced the AmBank BizCLUB (ambankbizclub.com), a business community and platform that aims to help SME business owners in Malaysia grow and scale their businesses.

This was in response to the bank’s perception that smaller companies struggle to succeed mainly because they lack the knowledge to take their business to the next level.

AmBank Group managing director of business banking, Christopher Yap, shared, “We want to provide businesses with more than just financial solutions; our ultimate aim is to help them scale and grow, access international markets, and certainly to play our part as a financial institution which embraces Value-Based Intermediation (VBI) to reduce failure rates, or improve sustainable management of high potential SMEs were coached and mentored to equip them with knowledge and methods to take their businesses to the next level.

AmBank received almost 1,000 entries, with the judges.

THE FINAL LAP

AmBank BizRACE has been a one-of-a-kind business competition like no other.

AmBank's initiative to help Malaysian businesses to the next level.

AmBank Group received almost 1,000 entries in January this year.

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The Top 15 proceeded to pitch their businesses to the judges.

Top 35 companies, AmBank BizRACE judges and sponsors, as well as members of AmBank’s senior management team gathered for the top event, the names of the champions for AmBank BizRACE 2018.

AmBank Group chairman, Tan Sri Azman Hashim went on a brief walkabout at the foyer before the main event began, looking at the photo wall featuring the Top 35 finalists and engaging the company representatives in conversation.

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

He also shared, “When you don’t get something that you wanted dearly, don’t get disappointed; just say ‘hey that was not meant to be – maybe something better is meant for you.”

“The sum of all of you, being entrepreneurs, has made you successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He also shared, “When you don’t get something that you wanted dearly, don’t get disappointed; just say ‘hey that was not meant to be – maybe something better is meant for you.”

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.

The chairman applauded the Top 35 in his opening address, saying, “You have proven that you have all the qualities to be very successful – resilience, commitment, passion, willingness to make sacrifices; I really wish you all the best, I know that you can continue growing in many ways.”

He reminded those gathered to think big, adding “Even if you can’t have success all the time, you must never stop. Don’t give up.”

The representatives took this golden opportunity to explain the nature of their business to AmBank who took the time to chat with all 15 companies.
THE SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS OF SEGAMAT

By JACK CHUA
sc@leaderonomics.com

EGAMAT Panel Boards (SPB) is a household name among engi
neers and manufacturers in Malaysia.

Known for medium-density fibreboard (MDF), the company also actively embraces environmentally friendly technologies.

SPB was named the Top 15 SMEs for Green Enterprise in Malaysia twice; first for the Prime Coating Line and High Gloss UV Laminating line in 2018, and now producing high quality decorative panels.

SPB has also invested in semi-finished and finished woodglues, including Prime Coating Line and High Gloss UV Laminating line.

SPB’s managing director, Ko O Chuan Zhen, followed the call of many who advise a stable, well-paying career – he had gone into engineering.

He said that this relationship was the only reason which keeps SPB afloat.

Although it has won many awards such as the Sin Chew Business Award, New Yang Golden Eagle Award, and The Star Outstanding Business Award, Ko feels that the trophies are not the only reason which keeps the company going.

The most important success story in the eyes of the founder is the ongoing reorganisation to reduce how clean energy is generated and consumed, one community at a time.

In early years, it has convinced organisations both large and small to embrace solar energy and will continue to prove those who are unsure that clean energy is practical, efficient, and profitable.

THE GLEANING YEARS AHEAD

According to Ko, in an innovation-filled industry, “founders need to be aware that sometimes other people also disrupt them”.

In his words: “The greatest business and personal problem is to acquire knowledge about the latest technologies and good routines to keep them well-informed.”

Seeing that many engineering companies in unsaturated seem to be caught behind latest developments in the industry, Plus Solar has a corporate social responsibility to contribute to the development of the industry.

The company also has a diverse set of products, each catering to the different needs of clients.

Their no-nonsense, results-oriented approach has been one community at a time.

Clean energy was still seen as largely less profitable when they started.

Ko and his team were first met with scepticism. The value that the firm can save by adopting more optimal solutions, they have provided their clean energy farms, to engineering students.

Clean energy was still seen as largely less profitable when they started.

Ko and his team were first met with scepticism. The value that the firm can save by adopting more optimal solutions, they have provided their clean energy farms, one community at a time.

The company also has a diverse set of products, each catering to the different needs of clients.

Their no-nonsense, results-oriented approach has been their business success, despite being relatively new players in the industry.

Ko believes that the key to how his company is able to generate energy at clean energy.

The company also has a diverse set of products, each catering to the different needs of clients.

Their no-nonsense, results-oriented approach has been their business success, despite being relatively new players in the industry.

Ko believes that the key to how his company is able to generate energy at

When asked what makes customised products so special, Ko put it this way: “Continual change is the only constant in the construction industry.

They are the key to how his company is able to generate energy at

The company also has a diverse set of products, each catering to the different needs of clients.

Their no-nonsense, results-oriented approach has been their business success, despite being relatively new players in the industry.

Ko believes that the key to how his company is able to generate energy at

Clean energy was still seen as largely less profitable when they started.
By JACK CHUA
editor@leaderonomics.com

HE’S more than a drink. They say it’s a lifestyle.
Within less than half a decade, Boom Beverage’s product Hausboom, a sparkling real juice drink, has made waves both nationally and internationally. Within seven months of commercialisation, Hausboom reached more than 3,000 outlets, retail stores, and cafes. They are also exporting to eight countries across Asia and Europe.
Recently, the company received the third prize in the AmBank BizRACE 2018 challenge, beating close to 1,000 small- and medium-sized enterprises and startups in a competitive elimination process that spanned eight months.

BEGINNINGS OF AN EXPLOSIVE GROWTH
The company’s founder and chief executive officer (CEO) Azri Zaher Azmi cites Coca-Cola as the inspiration for his business. Azri strongly believes in having a business in the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry that has powerful branding, meets international standards and can be worth billions of ringgit – just like Coca-Cola.
‘Setting itself apart, however, Hausboom aims to fill the void in the market for premium, halal, carbonated beverages made of real fruits.’
“If there’s a demand and the market is right, why not take that opportunity, as it does not come twice,” says Azri.
But how could Hausboom, a relatively unheard of name at the time, come up against bigger and more established beverage brands in the industry?
According to Azri, getting people to take notice and get excited about Hausboom was a major challenge when starting up his business in 2014. This was complicated by budgeting constraints, as they received neither government nor bank loans.
Their solution? They decided they were not merely here to sell a drink, but a lifestyle.
Hausboom is young, fresh and hip. It embraces culture, arts, and music. Since its inception, Hausboom has actively sought to become part of lifestyle events. They seized the initiative to become the official beverage sponsors for an event called Art of Speed 2017. It was Malaysia’s very own homegrown ‘OI-skool & Kustom Culture’ event — an event that featured customised classic cars on display.
“With an extensive booth design and layout, we successfully pulled the crowd to our booth and from there, they were amazed by the Hausboom drink itself,” Azri states.
The new fans they had made showed their support by purchasing their custom made merchandise and artwork, specially designed for the event. Things took off from there.
“This event opened us up to many business opportunities, as it was the starting point to commercialising and expanding the revenue we had. We were approached by major retail outlets and several other clients.”
This model has worked tremendously well for the startup.
To date, their authentic fruit juices fill up close to 900 Petronas Mesra stores and 600 Shell Select outlets nationwide. Internationally, they can be found in China, Brunei, Singapore, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Maldives.
It is because of this that the company looks keenly at the latest lifestyle trends to drive their brand. Azri believes this is one of the key strengths that heighten their brand’s value in the eyes of customers. He credits this as the main reason behind their brand’s ability to stand out compared to the rest of the local beverage companies, and experience jubilant sales figures for a company of its size.

EMBRACING INNOVATION IN MARKETING
The crew at Hausboom also love to push the limits in innovative and technology-driven marketing.
Never shy of fully utilising digital marketing to its advantage, the company has used augmented reality (AR) technology to build awareness of their campaigns and promotions.
Instead of just blasting the news out on social media platforms, they are currently using the AR approach where customers can scan their bottled drinks using their mobile phones and the app then shows them the current promotions and campaign for the particular period or month.
They have done this successfully in their Buy1Free1 campaign with Petronas Mesra.
Speaking about creativity, a good eye for design is also one of Hausboom’s key advantages.
The company has received several awards and recognitions including Best Malaysian Booth Design and Presentation at the Malaysia International Halal Showcase 2018, and Best Packaging Bottle for both their normal design bottles and limited edition bottles by Malaysia Good Design Mark.
Azri says that to be ahead of their competitors, they need to be agile.
“We must always be aware of the changes in the market to adapt quickly and easily,” he says.
He also stresses that his company must be able to localise the product according to the events, markets or even countries that they are penetrating, stating that this is important to create and sustain the relationship with their customers and distributors.

IMPACT IN THE COMING YEARS
When asked about the future of the company, Azri outlines an ambitious expansion to strengthen their distribution channels over the next few years. They will soon be landing on the shelves of more countries including Japan, Korea, Australia, the United States, India, and Dubai.
Very soon, you will find their products at your nearest 7-Eleven, Giant, or Mercato. Boom Beverage will also start to produce more products in other beverage segments such as coffee, dairy, and isotonic drinks.
Enthusiastic about how things are turning out, Azri remains firm on one thing.
“We will always make sure that we are different from the rest, in anything that we do.”
was appointed as CEO of the company on Apr 25, 1996 and of IOI Corporation Bhd on 2002. Lee was a board member of Bank Negara Malaysia from 2015 to 2018.
Lee is presently a non-executive director on the Boards of IOI Properties Group Bhd and Bumitama Agri Ltd respectively. He is also a trustee of Yayasan Tan Sri Lee Shin Cheng, the charitable arm of IOI Group.

Yap's recent key achievements was when he and his team won the award for 'Best SME Bank in Asia Pacific 2015' from The Asian Banker.

Teh was appointed chief business officer of Digi on Jan 1, 2018. He was formerly the chief corporate affairs officer. Prior to Digi, he was a director at the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) of the Prime Minister's Department. Teh previously helmed senior leadership roles in Arthur D. Little and McKinsey & Co. He was also a senior investment officer at Citibank Bhd Malaysia. Prior to joining AmlBank Group, he held the position of head of SME banking with Alliance Bank. Under his helm, the SME business accounted for 25% of revenue for the bank. One of Yap's recent key achievements was when he and his team won the award for 'Best SME Bank in Asia Pacific 2015' from The Asian Banker.

Zamree is the president and CEO at Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC). He has vast experience in the areas of corporate, consumer banking, and Islamic finance education. He began his career with Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) in 1989 until 2009.
Zamree also served as the chief operations officer of INCEIF – The Global University of Islamic Finance (CIF). On Feb 20, 2018, Zamree was awarded the ‘2018 Outstanding CEO Award’ by The Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAF).
Zamree holds a Master’s Degree in Business Administration – MBA (Finance) from the University of Hull, UK. He has also attended the Asian International Executive Programme (AIEP) at INSEAD and the Global Leadership Development Programme (GLDP) at ICFJ in 2006 and 2010 respectively. In the autumn of 2016, he attended the Advanced Management Programme (AMP 191) at Harvard Business School, USA.

Vivy also won the Young Entrepreneur Award presented by the Queen of Malaysia at the Tribute to Women's Award 2016, and is included in Forbes’ 30 Under 30 Asia, Class of 2017 and most recently won the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the HANGSÖ Prize sponsored: Premium value of RM50,000 for the purchase of Group Term Life coverage for Death and Total Permanent Disability.

Datin Vivy Yusof
Vivy, a law graduate from London School of Economics (LSE), is chief creative officer and co-founder at FashionValet.
Vivy currently oversees the brand image and handles collaborations and PR with her connections in the media and fashion industry. She is also the co-founder of The Ducky Group which is one of the fastest growing brands in Malaysia selling scarves, stationery, home and living items and most recently, cosmetics.

JUDGES
Christopher Yap Huey Wen
Yap is the managing director of Business Banking at AmlBank Group. He holds a Bachelor of Science from St Cloud State University, United States of America (USA) and brings with him close to 20 years of experience in the financial services industry with specific focus in the small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and commercial segments. Yap started his early career in Trade Services at Citibank Bhd Malaysia. Prior to joining AmlBank Group, he held the position of head of SME banking with Alliance Bank. Under his helm, the SME business accounted for 25% of revenue for the bank. One of Yap’s recent key achievements was when he and his team won the award for ‘Best SME Bank in Asia Pacific 2015’ from The Asian Banker.

Eugene Teh
Teh was appointed chief business officer of Digi on Jan 1, 2018. He was formerly the chief corporate affairs officer. Prior to Digi, he was a director at the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) of the Prime Minister’s Department. Teh previously helmed senior leadership roles in Arthur D. Little and McKinsey & Co. He was also a senior investment officer at Citibank Bhd Malaysia. Prior to joining AmlBank Group, he held the position of head of SME banking with Alliance Bank. Under his helm, the SME business accounted for 25% of revenue for the bank. One of Yap’s recent key achievements was when he and his team won the award for ‘Best SME Bank in Asia Pacific 2015’ from The Asian Banker.

Datuk Mohd Zamree Mohd Ishak
Zamree is the president and CEO at Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC). He has vast experience in the areas of corporate, consumer banking, and Islamic finance education. He began his career with Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) in 1989 until 2009.
Zamree also served as the chief operations officer of INCEIF – The Global University of Islamic Finance (CIF). On Feb 20, 2018, Zamree was awarded the ‘2018 Outstanding CEO Award’ by The Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAF).
Zamree holds a Master’s Degree in Business Administration – MBA (Finance) from the University of Hull, UK. He has also attended the Asian International Executive Programme (AIEP) at INSEAD and the Global Leadership Development Programme (GLDP) at ICFJ in 2006 and 2010 respectively. In the autumn of 2016, he attended the Advanced Management Programme (AMP 191) at Harvard Business School, USA.

Datuk Fadzarudin Anuar
Fadzarudin is the CEO and co-founder of FashionValet with his partner, Vivy Yusof. With the mission of elevating the local fashion industry, the company now has 150 employees and carries 500 fashion brands, shipping local Malaysian brands daily to customers worldwide. FashionValet has grown its online presence and attracted customers from all over Southeast Asia as well as Australia, UK, and the Middle East. Fadzarudin has taken FashionValet through three rounds of funding from Bursa Malaysia-listed MyEG, San Francisco-based VC Elur Capital and Japan’s largest online fashion portal, Zozotown. Recently, they secured investment from Khazanah Nasional, Malaysia’s sovereign wealth fund. He also leads the company’s strategic planning and business development. Fadzarudin holds a Masters in Aeronautical Engineering from Imperial College London.

AmBank BizRACE JUDGES AND SPONSORS

“Seeing all these companies come forward with such progressive business ideas has made me feel very excited about the future of Malaysian SMEs.”

“Has it been a privilege for me to be a part of this competition and witness this journey, and I hope more Malaysian SMEs would take the bold step and innovate to reach a new level.”

JUDGES

SPONSORS

HRDF
Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF)
Prize sponsored: For the top 15 finalists – A senior management development programme at a prestigious university overseas and a one-year subscription for the Harvard ManageMentor Digital Programme.

K-Pintar
Prize sponsored: Two seats to the European School of Management and Technology (ESMT) in Berlin, Germany worth over RM100,000.

AmMetLife
Prize sponsored: Premium value of RM50,000 for the purchase of Group Term Life coverage for Death and Total Permanent Disability.

CGC
Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC)
Prize sponsored: An opportunity to explore and penetrate the international market via a major international exhibition, worth over RM10,000.

Digi
Prize sponsored: Digi corporate solutions worth over RM10,000, comprising 7 units of the Samsung Note 8, and a suite of services from Digi including the Go Digi Plan, DSMS blasting service, Vehicle Tracking Solution, and an exclusive D-House digital working experience visit.
DO YOU OWN UP TO YOUR COMPANY’S MISTAKES?

A QUESTION FOR LEADERS TO PONDER

By EVA CHRISTODOLOU

eva.christodoulou@leaderonomics.com

FAMOUSLY, United States (US) President Harry S Truman (1884–1972) had a sign on his desk in the White House that read “The Buck Stops Here.”

The saying is a derivative of the expression “pass the buck” which means passing on the responsibility to someone else. It originates from the game of poker, where a marker indicated whose turn it was to deal.

If the player did not wish to deal, he could pass this marker to the next player for him to have a go. Not only did Truman have the sign on his desk, he also referred to it on a number of public statements, saying that when an issue comes to him, he is responsible to make a decision.

In his farewell address in 1953, he reiterated this idea: “The President – whoever he is – has to decide. He can’t pass the buck to anybody. No one else can do the deciding for him. That’s his job.”

Despite his unpopularity, Truman got that bit right.

Even though his leadership mantra has been misused over the years to imply that he took responsibility not just for the decisions he made, but for those of his team, personally feel this mantra is the one to follow.

Let me explain.

In organisations, there are different levels and layers of decision-making involved, it is easy to play the blame game – and easy to presume leaders’ non-involvement in any decisions that seem to have negative outcomes.

While it is true that decisions are often made at different levels, as the top leader, one should have known of the details or at least some level of knowledge of the events that have taken place.

If not, something must be wrong in the system.

How often, I wonder, do leaders take accountability for the actions of their teams and organisations?

Let’s reminisce…

REFUSING RESPONSIBILITY

Soon after the horrendous deep water oil spill in 2010, British Petroleum executives declared that their contractors were the ones responsible for the disaster. That’s an example of shifting accountability.

Its chief executive officer (CEO) Tony Hayward was slammed because of his audacious statements, famously saying: “There’s no one who wants this thing over more than I do. You know, I’d like my life back.”

MF Global was a major financial derivatives broker that went bankrupt in 2011.

Days before the commodity brokerage giant filed for bankruptcy, its chief risk officer Michael Stockman appeared before the House committee in the US and was asked some hard questions.

Its chief financial officer, on the other hand, told Standard and Poor that the company’s “capital and liquidity has never been stronger” just a week before the filing. Talk about misleading.

‘UNAWARE’ OF (UNETHICAL) ISSUES

Then there was the Volkswagen (VW) emissions scandal in 2015. Its CEO Martin Winterkorn resigned, saying that, “I am doing this in the interests of the company even though I am not aware of any wrongdoing on my part.”

This was after the company was found guilty of emissions discrepancies of 11 million diesel vehicles globally.

The company had “deliberately programmed” an engine management software that can control emissions when vehicles were being tested.

Can with this specific device ran up to 40 times more emissions when on the road, away from the testing site. Was he not aware? Well, maybe.

EMPTY APOLOGIES

Perhaps it’s best to just accept responsibility like what Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg did in April 2018 when he offered multiple apologies over the data privacy scandal with Cambridge Analytica.

“We didn’t take a broad enough view of our responsibility and that was a big mistake. It was my mistake, and I’m sorry,” Zuckerberg said.

Be aware though, as Zuckerberg is often apologising about his and his company’s actions in retrospect.

In fact, US congresswoman Jan Schakowsky reminded him: “You have a long history of growth and success, but you also have a long list of apologies.”

Gabrielle Adams, professor at the University of Virginia’s Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy commented, “When over and over [Facebook] keeps doing things that infringe on user privacy, at some point, apologies become empty words.”

How is it possible to apologise multiple times, and commit similar errors with no evident consequences?

ACCOUNTABILITY: AN OVERLOOKED TRAIT

Let’s give the benefit of the doubt and assume that they didn’t know any better.

A McKinsey article explains that, “In many large global companies, growing organisational complexity, anchored in strong product, functional, and regional axes, has clouded accountabilities. That means leaders are less able to delegate decision-making clearly, and the number of decision makers has risen.”

The article goes on to explain that multiple modes of communication contribute to reduced high-quality dialogue, and this leads to poor decisions.

In fact, a McKinsey survey found that 72% of the senior executive respondents thought that “bad strategic decisions either were about as frequent as good ones or were the prevailing norm in their organisation.”

The organisational complexity, murky accountabilities, and information overload have conspired to create messy decision-making processes in many companies,” says the article.

And perhaps it’s true. These companies are complex enough for us to understand that there may be a chance that the leaders at the very top may not be aware of what decisions are made at lower levels.

The problem with this, however, is that it’s comparable to a parent saying that he was not aware that his son was bullying his daughter because he works a lot.

It’s his job to know!

Another report by McKinsey found that over 90% of CEOs deem leadership of their company so important that they are planning to increase investment in leadership development.

It’s not that leadership development doesn’t happen, though; it’s that probably does not cover certain aspects of the leadership development as it should.

HARD TALK

HOW DOES ONE BECOME AN EFFECTIVE LEADER?

1 Character-building

In Leadershiponomics, it is our view that becoming an effective leader is a process that starts from a young age. From a young age, an important element that needs to be taken seriously and developed with much dedication is character building.

This is often overlooked in corporate development, as it is not a technical or functional competency that needs to be developed.

However, it is a very crucial element of leadership. In fact, accountability, just like integrity, perseverance, and other similar character traits are key in growing an effective leader.

2 The right candidate

With this in mind, a good approach is to look for candidates with the right character during the recruitment and succession planning processes.

With that, look for ways to identify and assess people’s character alongside all other criteria that an organisation has.

3 Organisational structure

The structure of an organisation needs to be conducive to ensure accountability – with the right checks and balances in place to empower people to make decisions.

Yet, the top leadership must be in the know of the elements that may affect the company as a whole.

4 Vision and culture

The culture and priorities of an organisation can do much to guide its employees and leaders towards the right direction, as can its structure.

An organisation that values certain character traits like accountability and integrity, perseverance, grit and curiosity has to build a culture in which the employees can be guided along the way to behave in this manner.

This can take place through coaching conversations, performance conversations, the language used to communicate key messages, justifications for people getting promoted, and learning sessions designed specifically to educate people on how they need to behave in their day-to-day work.

Just like any other competency, these too, can be measured, learnt and assessed over time.

In A NUTSHELL

Accountability seems more relevant now than ever. It is one of those values that is perhaps considered conservative, yet so crucial and necessary for everyone.

It is time that our community, be it society or the organisation we are in, to pay attention and work towards its enhancement, for the benefit of individuals and the organisation as a whole.

“Let us not answer to anyone, but let us answer to God for the life we lead.” Winston Churchill once said. “We build dwellings and thereafter they build us” – shape your leaders the way you want them to shape your organisation.

The power is in your hands.
By ANDREW GRIFFITHS
director@leaderonomics.com

RUNNING a business can certainly be challenging. Burnout is a real problem for business owners, especially as we get busier; face more demands and try to develop the ever-increasing skill set that we need to run our businesses. We need to know when it’s time to recharge our batteries.

ARE YOU AT RISK?

If you are feeling under pressure and stressed out, perhaps exhausted, check through the following list of the 10 most common reasons for getting out of balance in the first place, most build up over time.

The more items on the list you can relate to, the more likely it is that you are risking burnout and you need to take action.
1. Overwork: Simply putting in too many hours and being a slave to your business.
2. Financial problems: Struggling to make ends meet in the business and worrying about how you will pay your bills.
3. Over-commitment: Agreeing to do too much for too many people and not leaving enough time or energy for yourself.
4. Poor stress management: Not knowing how to manage your own stress or not being able to admit that it is a problem.
5. Relationship issues: With partners, family and friends, co-workers and customers.
7. Lack of direction: Feeling trapped and isolated in the business and uncertain about your future direction.
8. Lack of boundaries: Being too accessible to too many people.
9. No space to rejuvenate: No holidays, time out, hobbies or distractions to remind you why you do what you do.
10. Negativity: Having a negative environment or negative people around you every day can affect you.

ACTION PLAN

If you have all of these issues to deal with, a brief holiday will help you in the short term. More importantly, you need to make some major changes to your business and your life or you will simply keep repeating the burnout cycle.

Ultimately, this may cost you much more than you could imagine. Learning to take time out and work remotely is a way to get some distance between yourself and your business. This space provides the opportunity to look more objectively at the issues mentioned and to come up with solutions. The juggling act that every business owner needs to work on is reducing the stress and, at the same time, developing healthier lifestyles.

SUMMARY

If we can eliminate or at least reduce the stresses identified earlier, we will naturally feel more energised and more positive about our life and our business; and that encourages us to take better care of ourselves.

QUOTES

Patience, persistence, and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success.
– Napoleon Hill

In today’s world, change is the only constant. What do we need to equip ourselves with to be able to not just navigate it, but also make it beneficial to us? Leaderonomics’ Managing Editor, Lydia Gomez, talks about how to remain confident and secure as we experience changes. Listen to the podcast: bit.ly/RYGchange

The overall end result is our business will run more effortlessly, we make more money, we enjoy the process much more, and we live longer.

Andrew Griffiths is a Cairns, Australia-based serial entrepreneur and the author of 12 books on starting, managing, and growing small companies. He is a founding mentor in the global entrepreneurial programme, Key Person of Influence, and presents around the world on small business, consumer trends, entrepreneurship, and publishing. To share your thoughts with us on this article, send an email to director@leaderonomics.com.

If you are experiencing burnout, no amount of external motivation can alleviate your thoughts and emotions. One way out is to adopt self-care strategies that will help you adopt new perspectives. Check out these tips on Leaderonomics.com: bit.ly/SSburnout

Do you find yourself dreading to go to work on Monday mornings? Or, are you currently experiencing low-level energy at work? Here are our Top 10 ways to prepare yourself for a great day at work. Check out this infographic at: bit.ly/gtop10greatday

Like us at www.facebook.com/Leaderonomics/ and publishing. To share your thoughts with us on this article, send an email to director@leaderonomics.com.

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 MARSHALL GOLDSMITH
editor@leaderonomics.com

T HIS is a great question. If you answer it honestly:
Your answer could lead to your success or demise as a leader. It could be the key factor in your personal and family relationships.

So, let’s ask it again. Do you play well with others?

Many of us may think “plays well with others” is a category for grading schoolchildren, not grown-ups like us. We tell ourselves, “I’m a successful, confident adult. I shouldn’t have to constantly monitor if I’m being nice or if people like me.”

We may hold ourselves blameless for any interpersonal friction; it’s always someone else’s fault, not ours. “The other guy needs to change. I shouldn’t have to. In fact, I don’t need to; it’s his fault!”

Or, we’re so satisfied with how far our behaviour has already taken us in life that we smugly reject any reason to change. In other words, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

When my good friend Alan Mulally became chief executive officer of Ford, he set to work to create an environment where the executive team, notorious for not working together, could learn to play well with each other. Through Mulally’s leadership, the focus of the team and ultimately the focus of the entire company became, “How can we help one another more?”

It worked. The company survived.

It worked. The company survived through incredibly difficult times, and returned to achieving great success again through working together. If Ford had been a schoolyard, and the executives schoolchildren, they would have gotten the highest of marks in “playing well with others”.

HOW WELL DOES YOUR TEAM PLAY TOGETHER?

You can answer this question with your team by trying this simple four-step process, which I call “team building within the workplace”.

The steps are:

1. In a team meeting, ask each team member to rate “How well are we doing?” vs “How well do we need to be doing?” in terms of teamwork. Have each member do this on paper. Have one of the members calculate the scores — without identifying anyone.

On a scale of 1–10 — with 10 being the highest score — the average evaluation from over 1,000 teams is “We are a 5.8. We need to be an 8.”

2. Assuming there is a gap between “we are” and “we need to be”, ask each team member to list two key behaviours that, if each individual team member improved, could help close the gap and improve teamwork. Do not mention people — only behaviour — such as listening better, clear goals, etc. Then list the behaviours on a flip chart and have the team pick the one that they believe will have the biggest impact.

3. Have each team member conduct a three-minute, one-on-one meeting, with each of the other team members. (Do this while standing and rotate as members become available.)

In these sessions each person should ask, “Please suggest one or two positive changes I can make individually to help our team work together more effectively.”

Then have each person pick one behaviour to focus on improving.

4. Begin a regular monthly follow-up process in which each team member asks each other for suggestions on how to continue their improvement based on their behaviour the previous month. The conversations should focus on the specific areas identified for improvement individually as well as general suggestions for how to be better team members.

When asking for input, the rules are that the person receiving the ideas cannot judge or critique the ideas. He must just listen and say “thank you.” The person giving the ideas must focus on the future — not the past.

This is a quick and easy process that helps teams improve and helps team members become better team players. Try it for yourself and see!

By MARSHALL GOLDSMITH
editor@leaderonomics.com

Marshall Goldsmith is the author of 35 books, which have sold over two million copies and have been translated into 30 languages. Email us your thoughts on bad habits and behaviours you’ve seen in the workplace at editor@leaderonomics.com.

NO PRINT PULL-OUT NEXT WEEK.
WE’RE GOING FULLY DIGITAL!

The Leaderonomics pull-out will not be available in print next week. Instead, you can get a copy of our digital exclusive issue at bit.ly/idrEmag.

Look out for two bonus pages in this week’s digital pull-out!

You’ll see us in print again on June 9th.
You can also subscribe to our mailing list and we’ll send it straight to your inbox. Easy!
Harnessing
The Power of Teamwork

By VINESH NAIDU
editor@leaderonomics.com

A team is defined as “people working together toward a common goal or mission. The work is inter-dependent and team members share responsibility and hold themselves accountable for attaining the results.” - Massachusetts I.T.

Leaders need to lead, motivate, encourage, and provide support within teams. The “science of building leaders” (the tag line of Leaderonomics) isn’t going to be worth anything if there isn’t a TEAM to lead. This is at the core of all our activities, whether you are living, working or playing in a community. We as humans are societal beings. Can anyone really say they don’t want to be team players? A “team” is a dynamic entity and does not exist in the same way or form in every context. How a team is set up, what a team does, and more importantly, why a team is set up are crucial questions we need to ask ourselves at the workplace. Isn’t it funny how you spend all your schooling years striving for individual honours and recognition, be it being on the Dean’s List or being the School Captain. Then BOOM, all the job ads are asking for this alien concept – “Manager of a team”! What kind of evil ambush is this, I hear you say?

A group of people in itself does not necessarily constitute a team. What gets a team together is when members of a team start complementing each other with the skills they have and begin generating synergy through a coordinated effort. This allows for the maximising of strengths and the minimising of individual weaknesses. When all these costs are incurred, it inevitably translates to better productivity at work and, that, ladies and gentlemen, is the holy grail, isn’t it?

Teams can take many different forms. Let’s look at a few of these. Functional or departmental teams: This is the most common shape we encounter at the traditional workplace where a group of people come together and meet to analyse customer needs, solve problems, promote continuous improvement and share information amongst others. A team in this form is where a member is recruited in directly to perform a certain role and the power of team work is necessary to harness the best of talents in delivering the functional team’s goals.

Now what do you call a medical surgery team? Or something more easily identifiable – a football team? We call this a cross-functional team. Each individual brings to the team a unique skill and experience, and the power of the team is witnessed in the collaboration of these individuals to achieve a particular goal (no pun intended!).

And finally, we have a self-managing team. With the advent of technology in this day and age, this structure of a team is becoming more pervasive. If you are an individual who works from home, works on the go and liaises with your group of people infrequently and only for limited purpose, but to achieve the same goal, then you are operating in a self-managing team.

TEAM BUILDING APPROACHES

Understanding the motivation of a team forms a crucial part of deciding how to help build the team. It’s always a question of “WHY” before you proceed to the “WHAT” and “HOW”. This is fundamental methodology across the board. The intrinsic incentive for positive team behaviours differs from team to team and has to be understood before you can build an effective and powerful Team!

What are the similarities between the Ryder Cup (golf) and the Thomas Cup (badminton)? If you answered saying Malaysia only has a chance in one of these competitions, you aren’t totally off the mark.

However, that’s not the point that we are trying to make here. Whilst the members contribute their own skills, the OVERALL impact is on the team. The individual’s win or loss status determines the team’s win or loss status. We call this an independent team and we see this happening usually within the sales teams of organisations. It is very Adam Smith to its fundamental form to believe that individual efforts will inevitably drive the common benefit.

Similarly, with Barcelona, Bayern Munich, the Selecao – the success of every individual is inextricably bound to the success of the whole team. No significant task can be accomplished without the help and cooperation of all of the members. No football player, no matter how talented, has ever won a game by playing alone. (Maybe Messi is an exception to the rule)! This is how an inter-dependent team is exemplified.

WHERE IS YOUR TEAM TODAY?

Bruce Tuckman, an American psychologist introduced us to the most popular method of breaking down the life-cycle of teams. Identifying at which stage your team is currently will enable you to correctly strategise on how to lead forward successfully.

When you first pull together a group of individuals to begin the process of forming a team, everyone is at the forming stage. At this point, your group is still not considered a team. It is still a collection of individuals who are uncertain about roles, goals, and expectations. The group is fragile and as a leader, it’s your job to seize this opportunity to form the team by setting the rules of the game. We can see what happened when the forming stage under a new coach was not handled well by AVB at Chelsea – there was no engagement from the team. This made for a quick exit before the team was able to form.

The first and most important step in building a cohesive and functional team is the establishment of trust. Teamwork must be built on a solid foundation of vulnerability-based trust. This means that members of a cohesive, functional team must learn to comfortably and quickly acknowledge, without provocation, their mistakes, weaknesses, failures, and needs for help. They must also readily recognise the strengths of others, even when the strengths exceed their own.

Following the forming stage, teams begin to storm. This becomes an anxious period as the team experiences conflict over goals and more often than not, personalities. Michael De Saintamo, author of “Teams and Teamwork” says “When two people meet, there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as he wants to be seen and each man as he really is.”

One of the greatest inhibitors of teamwork among executive teams is the fear of conflict, which stems from two separate concerns. On the one hand, many leaders go to great lengths to avoid conflict among their teams because they worry that they will lose control of the group. Others do so because they see conflict as a waste of time. They prefer to cut meetings and discussions short by jumping to the decision that they believe will ultimately be adopted anyway, leaving more time for implementation and what they think of as “real work.”

Whatever the case, leaders who go to great lengths to avoid conflict often do so believing that they are strengthening their teams by avoiding destructive disagreement. This is ironic, because what they are really doing is stifling productive conflict and pushing important issues that need to be resolved under the carpet where they will fester. Eventually those unresolved issues transform into uglier and more personal forms of discord. It thus becomes crucial to team that this storming stage takes place as it serves to clear the air before everyone can move forward.

When we get through the storming stage, teams begin to ease into the norming stage at which point we see the gelling of individuals crystallising. Teams begin to believe in their collective capabilities and start agreeing on processes and working styles.

Finally, teams then move into the performing stage in which unity prevails and team members work positively, creatively and productively together – in other words, the finished article. So persevere in the creation of your teams – the outcome is always worth the effort!
“TAKEN HOSTAGE”

OVERCOMING CONFLICT BY ADOPTING HOSTAGE NEGOTIATION TACTICS

BY GEORGE KOHLRIESER
info@leaderonomics.com

Do you ever feel trapped, powerless, or helpless? If so, you are almost certainly a “psychological hostage.” We can be “held hostage” by people, by situations and even by our own emotions. We might be unhappy in a job because we are in an on-going struggle with a boss. We might be afraid to confront a colleague, friend, spouse or neighbour over a difficult problem. In each case, we are acting like a hostage, feeling as though someone is holding a gun to our heads. The good news is that we can take back our personal power and the ability to act by using the same tactics that real-life hostage negotiators use. I have been a hostage negotiator for more than 30 years and have been taken hostage four times. More than 95% of real hostage incidents are successfully resolved by using the correct techniques. That is why I believe we all have the power to avoid living like “psychological hostages.” Let’s take a look at some of the rules hostage negotiators follow. There are nine steps to resolving a conflict:

1. PUT THE “FISH ON THE TABLE”
   Once the fish – the issue – is put on the table we must go through the sometimes messy process of cleaning it for a great dinner at the end. If we ignore it, it will fester, become toxic, and rot under the table!

2. BOND, EVEN WITH AN “ENEMY”
   We do not need to like someone to bond with them. We create the bond so both sides can work towards a common goal.

3. UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF LOSS AND PAIN IN GENERATING CONFLICT
   Our whole lives are built on a “cycle of bonding”. We make attachments and form bonds, but the bonds break. When this happens we need to grieve, and if we do not grieve the broken bonds remain. Broken bonds and loss play an important role in generating conflict.

4. NEVER THINK LIKE A HOSTAGE
   Focus on what you want to achieve, not on the negatives. We always have a choice, even if only over how we feel.

5. USE THE POWER OF DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATION
   Talk. Engage the other party or parties in a dialogue and look for options to solve problems.

6. MAKE CONCESSIONS TO BUILD COOPERATION
   The aim is a win-win outcome for both sides through cooperation around a common goal. Concessions activate the bonding process and build trust and confidence.

7. BE A “SECURE BASE”
   When we become a secure base for someone we create the foundation for trust and confidence. The other party can lower or even stop defensive behaviour.

8. SEPARATE THE PERSON FROM THE PROBLEM
   The moment we make the other person the problem, we become a “hostage” to them. With a strong enough common goal, the conflict can be resolved even with the most difficult persons.

9. MASTER YOUR MIND’S EYE AND FOCUS ON A POSITIVE GOAL
   In a conflict situation, we can change our mental state from negative to positive by focusing on where we want to go rather than on barriers or problems.

These steps are the principles of successful hostage-negotiation. We can use them in any conflict in our daily lives, at work and at home. When we face a conflict, the steps provide a framework that allows us to find a mutually acceptable solution. The option to live with a hostage-free state of mind is one we can take right now. We never need to feel like hostages again, taking back our personal power to choose how we act and live our lives.

Dr. George Kohlrieser is Professor of Leadership at IMD in Switzerland but loves Malaysia. He has helped numerous leaders and organisations move from a state of being taken “hostage” metaphorically to a new state of growth and possibilities. To engage Dr. Kohlrieser for your organisation, email people@leaderonomics.com for more information on special programmes.