EMBRACING THE GIFT OF GRATITUDE

LESSONS FROM JOAN OF ARC

HOW TO BE HAPPIER WITH GRATITUDE

THE 21ST CENTURY CLASSROOM

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MERRY CHRISTMAS
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It's the time of the year when most businesses will report their achievements against targets set. Most of it will be in numbers. However, valuable stories behind the numbers are often not captured or shared.

In 2004, a study of 240 organisations in the United States (US) found that the greatest impact of employee turnover was lost knowledge, and not profitability! Even in a country where knowledge management practices abound, lost knowledge had negatively affected a staggering 78 per cent of these organisations.

Stories transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and are great vehicles to share that knowledge.

Tacit knowledge is knowledge embedded in the human mind through experience. Personal wisdom and experience which are context-specific are difficult to extract and codify. Tacit knowledge includes such wisdom and other insights.

Explicit knowledge on the other hand, is codified and digitised in books, documents, reports, memos, etc. It is knowledge that is easily identified, articulated, shared and employed.

Using stories is one of the more powerful knowledge management practices. Stories transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and are great vehicles to share that knowledge.

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In an interview a few years ago, a senior manager from NASA confessed, “If we want to go to the moon again, we’ll be starting from scratch because all of that knowledge has disappeared.” Shocking, but true. No wonder NASA now runs one of the more evolved knowledge management practices in the world.

Today, NASA’s Academy of Programme and Project Leadership (APPL) uses storytelling as a primary vehicle for transferring project management expertise. This is done using a series of story-based knowledge-sharing meetings that are supplemented by ASK, a bimonthly online magazine. ASK is dedicated to stories about project management at NASA. Here is a beautiful example of the benefit of storytelling about knowledge management at NASA taken from David DeLong’s seminal work: Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Ageing Workforce.

THE NASA STORY

One example of how storytelling can effectively pass on knowledge that influences decision-making was reflected in the experience of Roy Malone, head of logistics services at NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center.

Shortly before attending an APPL forum for master project managers, Malone was told his budget had been cut by 12 per cent. He spent a month trying to find other ways to deal with the USD1.1mil budget cut, but in the end Malone knew this meant he would have to lay off people.

During the masters’ forum, Malone heard a story told by Judy Stokley, a programme director in the US Air Force, who described how she had handled a similar painful downsizing challenge. The logistics manager returned to Marshall inspired by the storyteller’s ‘humanitarian’ approach, and he proceeded to adapt a number of the actions she used to his own situation.

Malone also told employees about the cuts the department was facing, giving those who would be let go a three-month warning.

Finally, he held a series of open meetings with employees to let them vent their anger at the cuts and to educate them as best he could about the centre’s financial situation.

In the end, Malone attributed the impact of the layoffs he had to implement.

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By ROSHAN THIRAN
roshan.thiran@leaderonomics.com

I am not afraid, I was born to do this.

S

HE was an iconic leader who claimed to hear the voice of God instructing her to help free her people from English rule, and her fearless leadership inspired a nation to eventually realize her vision. Joan of Arc (c. 1412-1431) was born in Domrémy, France to a poor farmer and his wife—a woman who would teach her daughter the virtues of piety and humility that would remain steadfast with Joan throughout her life.

At the time of her birth, France had long been engaged in a series of conflicts with England, known collectively as The Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453). In 1420, Henry V of England took the French throne as regent to the insane King Charles VI. The plan was that Henry would take the throne following Charles’ death; however, in 1422, both men died within months of each other, leaving Henry’s young son as the ruler of both countries. Supporter of Charles’ son, who would later become Charles VII, pressed for the opportunity to return a French king to the throne, and it was around then that a young Joan of Arc began to receive visions instructing her to lead a virtuous life. By 1428, the young woman was convinced it was her mission in life to help save France from English rule, and so she set out to secure a private audience with Charles—then the presumptive heir to the throne.

To achieve this, she sought the help of Robert de Baudricourt, the garrison commander and a supporter of Charles. Initially, she was refused; however, due to the support she was gaining among the people, her audience was eventually granted, and she got her private meeting with Charles in 1429.

Despite his reservations, Joan had done enough to convince him that she should be given the opportunity to lead French troops against the English. It’s speculated that she revealed to him details of a private prayer he had made to God to help save his country, and that only a messenger of God could know this information.

Eventually, the charismatic young woman, then aged 17, was given permission to join the army and go to Orleans, where the English had laid siege. Following a string of heated battles over the space of three days, the French managed to weaken English forces and their morale.

Although Joan was injured twice, she returned to lead her troops to embark on a final push for victory. In 1429, Charles was crowned King Charles VII of France, and Joan was present at the ceremonies. The following year, the new king sent her to Compiegne to confront the Burgundian assault. It was during this battle that she was captured and eventually turned over to the English for the price of 20,000 francs. Joan was subsequently turned over to church officials, and was charged with 70 counts including witchcraft, heresy, and dressing like a man.

On May 29, 1431, the 19-year-old Joan was convicted of heresy and sentenced to death by burning at the stake. The following day, she was taken to the marketplace in the French city of Rouen, where her sentence was carried out in the presence of over 10,000 people.

We can all impact the world around us if we follow our faith and make use of the courage that rests within us.

In 1456, three years after the end of The Hundred Years’ War, King Charles VII declared Joan of Arc innocent of all charges and avowed her as a martyr.

Leadership Lessons from Joan of Arc

1. Stick to Your Vision Despite the Obstacles You Face

Joan of Arc had a vision to free France from English tyranny. She was convinced that the starting point of realising this vision was to seek an audience with the heir to the French throne (the future King Charles VII). She was refused countless times, despite the help of local military leader, Robert de Baudricourt. However, she never gave up and eventually was able to secure a private meeting with the heir to the French throne.

2. Be Strong and Lead from the Front

France’s peasant heroine led her troops without fear, and despite suffering injuries in battle, she sought strength in her faith and continued in her mission.

3. Always Remain True to Your Values

Following her private conversations with Charles, even though the future King of France was impressed by Joan’s spirit, he had eminent churchmen examine her. It’s said that they only found the young woman to be driven by piety, chastity and humility.

The values that she held dear throughout her life and they never wavered. In leadership, it is vital to have core values that drive everything you do; you help to ensure your authenticity as a leader and from there, the road to success becomes much easier to navigate.

Even though there will be many calls to change your values, you must be clear as to what they are and you must hold on dearly to them, even if it may cause you short-term losses. Great leaders know that holding on to their values will bring long-term gains, even though it may be painful in the short-term.

Did You Know?

Despite her status as a warrior, Joan of Arc never took part in active combat. She remained behind the frontlines and would devise military strategies and direction for French troops. She also led them into battle.

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In this Raise Your Game session, Ashvaaani Ramanathan addresses the increasing need to get corporate culture right and how sometimes, the steps are simpler than we think. Check it out here: bit.ly/RYGcorporate culture

Jerome Parisse-Brassens is a culture change expert and a management consultant with over 25 years of experience in culture transformation, change management, leadership development, and business improvement. To contact him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com

COGNITIVE culture is sometimes defined as ‘our mental and symbolic representations of reality’ or in other words, our worldview.

Cognitive culture is the culture that is typically addressed upfront by organisations. This is the culture that is advertised to the external world, and also the culture that the business is aiming for, often called target or ideal culture.

Typical elements that feed into the cognitive culture include:
- Cultural attributes such as customer centricity, collaboration, innovation or agility
- Behaviours. For example, speaking up, responsiveness, empowerment, making things simple
- Stated values. These values are identified by the organisation as those needing to be lived by employees in their daily interactions. However, what we often find is that stated values are not always the values espoused by the people.
- Any artefact or norms. Processes and systems fit into this category. They have been designed (or not) to push people to behave in a certain way.

EMOTIONAL culture

Emotional culture can be defined as the culture centered around the shared affective values of an organisation i.e. feelings, moods and attitudes. These emotions and feelings, including fears, that employees experience in the workplace, and of everything that leads to those emotions being expressed or repressed.

Typical elements that feed into the emotional culture include:
- Lived values. These are different from the stated values. Lived values are often the result of external and internal events, such as a crisis, changes in leadership, changes in the environment, or deliberate attempts at shaping values.
- Feelings are often the direct result of particular emotions playing out in the workplace. Engagement data measures those feelings, and in particular, how committed employees are in doing their work.
- Emotions. A huge variety of shared emotions can be found in any organisation. I often find the following fears when conducting culture assessments: fear of exclusion, fear of making a mistake, fear of leaders / hierarchy, fear of not knowing, fear of not being perfect.
- Any artefact or norms that contribute to the creation of particular emotions.

Many symbols in an organisation can send a message about what is valued and create emotions and feelings that are at odds with what the business intends to create.

Put simply, cognitive culture is about thinking, emotional culture is about feeling.

WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL CULTURES?

The two types of cultures are created and reinforced through different mechanisms. Cognitive culture is created through strategic culture planning, role modelling by leaders, and a combination of systems and symbols. Emotional culture is less influenced by systems but a lot more by leadership and symbols.

The emotional culture can reinforce the cognitive culture or play against it. A large gap between emotional and cognitive cultures tends to indicate that the culture is not being managed actively in the business, that leaders may not walk their talk.

In this Raise Your Game session, Jerome Parisse-Brassens is a culture change expert and a management consultant with over 25 years of experience in culture transformation, change management, leadership development, and business improvement. To contact him, e-mail: info@leaderonomics.com

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR CULTURE JOURNEY?

Working on culture means aligning your emotional culture with your cognitive culture. The smaller the gap, the healthier your culture.

You may be across your cognitive culture but may not know your emotional culture. One of the first steps of a culture journey is to discover your emotional culture.

This is about diagnosing culture to understand why it is the way it is. What is the shared belief system that exists in the organisation and pushes people to behave in a certain way? What are the values that are truly lived? What are the fears, emotions, and feelings that impact people?

Once you deeply understand your emotional culture, you can compare it with your cognitive culture and assess the extent of the gap.

To reduce the gap, you will need to support your leaders in becoming role models of the behaviours you want to see displayed by employees. You will also need to realign your systems and processes with what you are trying to achieve.

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INVESTING IN THE FUTURE
THE ROLE OF R&D IN BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

By CHRISTIE CHUA
christie.chua@leaderonomics.com

I f you had to rate the importance of research and development (R&D) on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being ‘extremely important’, what score would you give it?

Many entrepreneurs and medium-sized enterprise (SME) owners do not understand, or at least underestimate, the importance of R&D and it is all too often pushed aside to make way for aspects of the business which are deemed more crucial.

However, R&D provides a platform for creativity and innovation to flourish in an organisation, and many innovative breakthroughs have only occurred as a result of countless years of R&D.

On a larger scale, R&D is also vital for the development of the country and to maintain our competitiveness in the international market.

The dynamism of the business enterprise sector plays a large role in whether Malaysia will achieve its target of a two per cent gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD)/gross domestic product (GDP) ratio by 2020.

In the 2015 UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030, it was reported that while the private sector participation in R&D in Malaysia had risen significantly since 2005, it was still relatively low compared to other dynamic Asian economies, such as Singapore and the Republic of Korea.

COMPELLING REASON TO CHANGE

Segamat Panel Boards (SPB) originally specialised in high quality, thin panel medium-density fibreboard (MDF), but the product has become commoditised over the years with fierce competition coming from neighbouring countries, such as Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

As business cycles grow shorter, the company realised that its business model was quickly becoming outdated. This was partly due to the dwindling availability of rubberwood, the natural resource used to produce MDFs and other wood-based products.

“It’s not just our business model; it’s really a challenge for the Malaysian timber industry as a whole,” says SPB managing director Peter Fitch. “This issue has been highlighted over the years, but the progress in terms of finding a solution for the industry has been very slow, or not happening at all.”

Fortunately, the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) finally sees to understand that this is a real issue, and now the focus is on having the private sector lead the change, instead of the government institutions.

CHALLENGES IN R&D

Fitch says that the private sector – especially SMEs – are the birthplace of innovation, and the next phase of growth will come from these innovative ideas.

However, they are often held back by the fear of failure and tend to play it safe, preferring to be followers rather than leaders in the industry.

“They (SME owners) will see what others are doing, and they’ll do the same, with the mindset that ‘maybe we can be one of the better ones because our labour costs are a bit lower’ or that they can do things a little bit better in other ways,” says Fitch.

Fitch believes that this mindset is – to a certain extent – created by government policies that seem to penalise, rather than support businesses in the industry.

“Many of these policies seem to be about how to restrict industries with all the rules and regulations, and this is all stifling innovation and the development of new businesses. There’s so much red tape that SMEs hesitate to step out and take a chance.”

For this to change, Fitch says that government agencies must realise that innovation and scalability originate from the private sector, and because the industry players know best, their advice should be heeded when it comes to creating policies that will directly impact the industry.

He shares an example of his experience in Thailand: “I attended a meeting between agencies from the government and private sectors, and it was very clear to see that the direction for innovation, changes, and any policies was coming from the private sector.

“The government agencies were told to support and facilitate those changes, to help the private sector develop further and reach their commercial potential.”

Fitch believes that this should be the case in Malaysia as well. Government agencies should facilitate the industry’s efforts to be innovative, instead of dictating its direction.

“If we make this change, it’s going to be a huge shift in mindset and more innovation will definitely start to come through,” says Fitch.

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

Unlike the majority of SMEs, SPB does not shy away from innovation. Faced with the decline of its main source of raw materials (rubberwood and tropical timbers), the company sought an alternative that would be more sustainable in the long term.

Through collaborations with researchers from several European universities, SPB successfully identified oil palm trunks (OPT) as a viable source of raw material.

Fitch: The private sector – especially SMEs – are the birthplace of innovation, and the next phase of growth will come from these innovative ideas.

At the moment, oil palm biomass – which includes OPT, empty fruit bunches (EFB) and palm fronds – is the most abundant but underutilised natural resource in Malaysia, as they are considered waste products.

Fitch says that several Malaysian institutions have worked on projects to utilise oil palm and oil palm biomass. “However, they kept coming to a dead end in terms of how to commercialise the process, so this is where we had to think out of the box – how we can use this material in a new way to create a product that would not just replace timber, but be more superior to it.”

He shares that the research conducted by the European institutions was originally on coconut palm, but they soon realised that some of this research and technology could be applied to develop timber-type materials from oil palm as well, since the two resources are similar.

“The clue was to try to use it in a similar way as other people have used coconut palm,” says Fitch when asked about the idea behind using OPT.

MOVING FORWARD

SPB’s long-term vision is to synergically combine the existing products (thin panel MDF and decorative papers) with an OPT core to produce an engineered panel that is superior in properties compared to wood panel products that are currently available.

According to Fitch, this new product has many advantages such as being light weight and having greater physical strength. It is also fire retardant and has minimal impact on the environment as it has low formaldehyde emission.

Fitch elaborates: “The beauty of this product is that it is extremely versatile and can be engineered for specific purposes, all achieved in a cost-effective package. Once the business model is proven, it can be scaled very quickly due to the abundance of raw material.

“We currently don’t have the facilities to process OPT on a commercial scale, but we have already secured the necessary funding and the first phase of production is scheduled for completion by the end of 2019.”

Fitch eagerly adds that the development would not just stop at producing engineered OPT core panels; the company has plans to develop other structural products from OPT, such as glue laminated beams (glulam) and cross-laminated timber (CLT) – both of which are trending globally as eco-friendly building materials.

Innovative green products should be the next driver for the industry’s growth, as this will help Malaysia maintain its edge in an increasingly competitive global market.

Dedicated R&D opens up many opportunities for innovation, and with enough local raw material of raw material for the timber industry on the decline, it is even more crucial that businesses seek sustainable alternatives to help the industry grow further.
GRATITUDE LEADS TO HAPPINESS

By MATT O’DARBY

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HAPPINESS is a goal that almost everyone wants to achieve. It may seem like an impossible task, but the truth is that happiness actually means something different to everyone.

According to a recent survey, only 33% of Americans were able to say that they were happy. This might be because they were simply busier with their daily activities and did not have enough time to think about it. However, there are steps that one can take to improve their happiness.

Gratitude is a feeling that one should embrace, as it brings positive thoughts into your life. These positive thoughts fill your mind and make you feel good. When you have positive thoughts, you are more likely to have a healthy and happy outlook on life.

Happier people tend to be more successful in their careers and relationships. This is why it is important to practice gratitude regularly.

A study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that people who practiced gratitude regularly were more successful in achieving their goals than those who did not.

Gratitude can also help you to manage stress. When you focus on the things that you are grateful for, you are less likely to notice the things that are causing you stress.

When you eat a meal, take time to appreciate the food, the people who prepared it, and the experience of eating. This can help you to feel more content and satisfied.

When you have a positive attitude, you are more likely to see the good in others and in your life. This can help you to build strong relationships and feel more connected to those around you.

As Abraham Lincoln once said, “I am a slow walker, but I never walk back.”

Lincoln was known for his humble attitude, and he once said, “I am a slow walker, but I never walk back.”

This shows that even if you are facing challenges, you can still move forward and achieve your goals.

The key to happiness is not to focus on what you don’t have, but to appreciate what you do have.

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The key to happiness is not to focus on what you don’t have, but to appreciate what you do have.
LEADERSHIP means different things to different people. It can be applied to sell or a group of people, and can be leveraged to achieve something extraordinary, or simply be more effective in day-to-day tasks.

Sometimes leadership is seen as something special for a select few. The truth is, everyone needs a certain amount of leadership in their lives, and in the end, it is not as exclusive as it is made out to be. Being such an important quality, leadership is something we are striving to nurture in everyone we interact with, in line with their dreams, aspirations and life journey.

Here in Leaderonomics, we found that leadership is a journey that starts from a young age. And as such, there are multiple elements to it, all needing to be developed intentionally at different stages.

Earlier this year, we ran a survey to try and understand what parents tend to value and work on with their children. As a part of this survey, we also tried to understand what parents’ perceptions of leadership are, and how they see it relevant to themselves. In this article, we’ll be talking about the responses we received.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP IN YOUR CURRENT CONTEXT?

We posed this question in our survey, and received a variety of responses: 9.7% said that it is very important without elaborating, 8.8% stated that they are unsure, while another 8% felt that leadership has high value. The rest provided us with an understanding of leadership in their context instead.

For example, 5.3% of respondents emphasised the role of a leader as a role model for those around them (including children). Another 10% of respondents emphasised personality and character traits such as integrity, honesty, responsibility, and accountability as the determinants of leadership.

Other answers covered attributes such as confidence, ability to have followers, leading others to achieve something, influencing, empowering others, serving others, teamwork and collaboration, being humble and consisderate, dedication, commitment, important for success and income/wealth.

One respondent mentioned that leadership is important in all areas of life, e.g. a family needs a leader. Others focused on how it is important in work.

WHO DO YOU THINK IS A GOOD LEADER?

We wanted to understand who parents look up to as a good leader. To this, our respondents gave the following answers:

13.2% of respondents identified several famous figures, 17.8% of respondents identified Mahatma Gandhi.

Former United States president Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela were identified by 4.4% of respondents each; 3.5% mentioned Winston Churchill; 4.5% named a work leader or manager; 43.5% identified their own parents; 2.7% their uncle or aunt; 2.65% stated Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad; Elon Musk and Lee Kuan Yew were named by 1.76% of respondents each. Another 1.76% stated their husbands were good leaders. A variety of other names came up, categorised in Table 1.

The reasons given for choosing the above as good leaders, are categorised in Table 2.

Overall, we found that respondents recognise the value of leadership, and it seems that everyone has very different opinions as to how and where it is applied.

What’s interesting to see is how some respondents recognise that leadership is needed in all aspects of life (including family and community). Yet, the majority of people stated that they see leaders as people whose actions impact larger groups, instead of just family members (majority being statesmen and religious figures as leaders).

The reasons for choosing those people also indicates the kind of qualities, character, values and abilities that people generally associate with leadership, indicating a good mix of skills and character traits.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A LEADER?

Reassuringly, most of our respondents answered a clear yes (61.1%). 8% answered with a clear no, while an additional 6.2% with “not yet”, “not really”, “not an effective leader”, “not there yet”, and “working on it.” 11.5% of them gave some variation of “partly”, one was unsure, answering “maybe”. The one who was unsure also added that sometimes he/she is a leader, but at other times may be a follower.

Some of the comments from those who answered “no” were interesting as they pointed to the attributes that these people consider crucial in leadership, and those they feel they lack on a personal level.

These include influencing powers; being truly self-sacrificing; enthusiasm; preference to be more of a follower; not a people person; just “an ordinary teacher”; gaining consensus in a team/group; charisma, and preference not to lead all the time.

Interestingly, those who responded yes or a partial yes explained that they are leaders because of one or two attributes they consider important. They did not focus on gaps they may have or try to list down all attributes they think a leader should have.

One parent responded: “Yes. Because I lead myself and others all the time. Sometimes well, sometimes great, and sometimes not so great.”

When asked what she meant, she said that most people have a perception that the leader has to do the right thing all the time, and she tries to make it much more real for herself and her children by being brave, enforcing what “we” believe is right, and doing things without worrying about consequences (while still being aware of what may happen in effect).

It is interesting to also see a number of parents answering not yet, or not really, indicating that they are aiming to get there, but currently lacking certain skills or aspects of what they see as necessary to leadership.

It is reassuring to know that people understand that leadership is for everyone, and not a concept reserved only for those whose names are attached to specific designations or titles.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of leader</th>
<th>% of times mentioned</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious figure</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various statesmen and heads of state</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work manager</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful business leaders</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Famous personalities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in the community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superheroes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local NGO leaders and justice fighters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone who can work with everyone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for viewing the above as good leaders</th>
<th>% of times cited</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drive to help people</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead by example</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant achievements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grit and perseverance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens and understands others</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivers on promises; commitment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresight and vision</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courageous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humble</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get people to follow</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead successfully through challenging times</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
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<td>Respected by peers</td>
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<td>Going beyond</td>
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<td>Fight for ideals</td>
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<td>Non-violence</td>
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<td>Care</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
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<td>Knowledgeable, intelligent</td>
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<td>Honesty</td>
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<td>Witty</td>
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<td>Emphasis on health and education</td>
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<td>Wisdom and maturity</td>
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<td>Upright</td>
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<td>Innovative</td>
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<td>Made a difference</td>
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<td>Served others</td>
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<td>Multitask</td>
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<td>Family values</td>
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<td>Agility</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Not afraid of failure</td>
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<td>Inspire hope</td>
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<td>Clarity of thinking</td>
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<td>Practical</td>
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<td>Faith</td>
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<td>Kindness</td>
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<td>Fight for good over evil</td>
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<td>Loving husband</td>
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<td>Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving back</td>
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In Leaderonomics, we truly believe that anyone can be a leader in their field as long as they are able to make a difference, lead a group of people (be it at work, the family, the community, or the country), and inspire change or improvement.
By ALAN MANLY
editor@leaderonomics.com

T he thrill of establishing a start-up is much like the thrill of a new relationship. It’s new, exciting, and everyone involved is highly motivated and interested — at least for the first six months or so. While this is too short a time to measure business success, it is long enough for founders and supporters to start to wonder about the viability of their new venture.

The initial surge of sales, often from opening specials or pre-launch sales, has by now been exhausted. New sales are hard work because one new start-up rarely expands the market. Rather, it disrupts the incumbents who will make changes to address the disruption. In doing so, they slow down the newcomer’s success. The start-up’s ability to work through this challenging period relies on the energy of a highly motivated team. Maintaining that motivation is the key to the new entrepreneur’s success. The start-up’s ability to change to address the disruption.

In doing so, they slow down the newcomer’s success. The start-up’s ability to work through this challenging period relies on the energy of a highly motivated team. Maintaining that motivation is the magic of many successful start-ups. Here are a few steps to help you and your team stay motivated as you grow.

1. Revisit your business plan
   If the enthusiasm starts to wane, start by revisiting the document that holds your vision and purpose. Your business plan explains why your start-up holds your vision and purpose. Your business plan is exclusive to the market they were originally targeted at.

2. Assess what has changed in the market
   When you identified your target market in the business plan, it was all about being in tune with the market at the time the start-up launched. Tales abound of famous companies that initially missed the market. Few products and services end up selling exclusively to the market they were originally targeted at.

3. Rewrite the introduction
   The introduction of the business plan for a start-up is intended to entice entrepreneurs, investors and supporters to get on board. It aims to inspire all who read it — but down the track, its once sound assumptions can often be exposed as glaring errors.

4. While it’s not a glamorous-sounding goal, it is a huge motivator for you and your team as it allows you to keep building. Achieve it, and you’ll keep the dream alive.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER
Staying motivated as you build your start-up can be just as challenging as establishing the business in the first place.

Once the initial thrill fades, the demand for business acumen kicks in. When in doubt, take heart from one of history’s greatest entrepreneurs and inventors, Thomas Edison who said: “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realise how close they were to success when they gave up.”

By ALAN MANLY

Alan Manly is the founder and CEO of Group Colleges Australia, one of Australia’s largest private education institutions, and recently launched the private MBA school, the Universal Business School Sydney. From a high school dropout to successful entrepreneur, Alan is a true disrupter in the private education space. He is the author of two books, The Unlikely Entrepreneur and When There Are Too Many Lawyers There is No Justice. To engage with him, send an email to editor@leaderonomics.com.

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By ROUBEENI MOHAN
roubeeni.mohan@leaderonomics.com

THE TECHNOLOGY is everywhere and it is intertwined in our daily lives. It impacts the way we live, play and also learn. The learning environment in schools has the power to influence a child’s learning experience.

As technology advances, schools today must be able to weave knowledge of computer sciences into the core curriculum in order to prepare students for the future.

According to code.org (a non-profit organisation in the United States (US) that is dedicated to expanding access to computer science in schools) founder and chief executive officer (CEO) Hadi Partovi, 44 states in the US have changed policies to recognise computer science as part of the academic core.

Malaysia is also heading in this direction, with the 2016 announcement by the government to expand school-day access to computer science.

GIVING CLASSROOMS A FACELIFT

The widespread use of technology has paved a new path in the learning experience. This became a catalyst for the creation of the Frog Classrooms, a concept by YTL Foundation to facilitate learning through collaboration and critical thinking, and by encouraging creativity.

The very first Frog Classroom was designed for a secondary school in Puchong in 2014, after YTL Foundation Programme Director Datin Kathleen Chew paid a visit to the school.

“When I entered the classroom, I was rendered speechless. The tables and chairs were broken. There was even a hole in the door,” she tells us.

“The classroom that we wanted to build was something that would make the children excited to go into every day. It had to be fun for the kids, and noticing that the children had a lot of pent up energy, our designer decided to fix a punching bag for the boys. A mirror was also added for the girls.”

Also, we saw that the kids loved doodling on their tables, so to curb that, the designers drew beautiful murals, quotes and poetry on the tables.

This, she says, was done to encourage the students to channel their creativity in the right way.

Each transformed classroom also uses the Frog virtual learning environment (VLE), a platform that allows teachers to upload their learning materials onto its system.

“When a teacher retires, they take all their experience and expertise with them. The Frog VLE encourages teachers to create content, and then share and store the content. When a teacher retires, these stored materials will be helpful for the new teachers,” she adds.

The process of building a classroom should be one that is relatively simple, Chew says. “While building the Frog Classroom, we took into account that transforming a normal classroom should be easy. This was done to encourage schools to do it themselves with the help of teachers and parents, (and) with no need for contractors.”

The Frog Classroom was initially a project carried out by the YTL Group of Companies under which 12 classrooms in various schools nationwide were transformed. A year later in 2015, the project caught the attention of schools, students, parents and the Education Ministry.

As more schools became interested, the YTL team realised that there was the potential to get schools across the country to be on board as well. However, the schools needed to meet a set of criteria and work alongside their parent-teacher associations (PTA).

“The school also has to be ready from the programme, it would be this. “There are a lot of people working to try to improve the education system and we all want to make a difference – how we all can help the ecosystem. We are trying to collaborate to see how we can make a bigger difference when we come together collectively,” says Chew.

Please visit www.frogclassroom.com to check for eligibility and the eight steps to the application process. Schools will have to meet the criteria set by the Foundation before the air-conditioning units, chairs and custom-made tables are provided.

Changing the Outlook of Learning

How Modern and Vibrant Classrooms Motivate Students to Learn

become a part of the Frog Hub programme, so that neighbouring schools can come and use technology or share what they are doing with other schools,” says Chew.

Through this effort, there are now 250 classrooms. Chew explains, however, that rural schools have a harder time raising funds to set up a Frog Classroom.

Chew says it is when the principals of the participating schools spearhead the initiative to take part in this programme that it becomes a success.

“Some schools are very active in participating as a Frog Hub, and some schools don’t do so well. We just believe that if we can get 1,000 of these classrooms and teachers who are willing to help and teach this way, then we will be able to influence the rest of the 10,000 schools in the country to transform how they teach, utilising technology and the Frog VLE.”

A recent research to study the impact of the Frog Classrooms on teaching and learning was conducted by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, involving over 15 schools with 400 teachers and over 2,000 students.

The results of this study indicated that the Frog Classrooms allowed for more effective learning, active participation and better student engagement. Teachers were also found to be more innovative and creative in their teaching approaches.

Teachers – equipped with the chance to facilitate rather than simply instruct students’ learning – were found to help students become more self-driven in their learning methods. The classroom had also improved peer-to-peer relationships as well as interactions between teachers and students.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

YTL Foundation soon realised that school leadership is critical to school transformation. “The whole ecosystem has to work,” says Chew. “Every principal and teacher should take up a leadership role.”

To achieve this, they started incubating a two-year programme known as the Global School Leaders (GSL) Malaysia Programme, in collaboration with Global School Leaders – a successful school leadership programme.

The GSL programme was first started in India and has a cost effective model that has been run in hundreds of schools there. GSL India co-founder and CEO Sameer Sampat was invited to Malaysia to discuss how they could implement this here. At the end of 2017, the programme received government approval and a pilot was launched early this year.

Twenty-four primary and secondary schools – with 75 principals and senior assistants – are currently participating as a Frog Hub, and GSL trainers will visit the schools at least once a month to observe if they continue to implement what they have learnt from the programme.

Chew adds: “It is sitting with the teacher and talking through the challenges that is the unique part of this programme and it makes it stand out from others.”

Trainers go to the school and coach the participants, hands on. “I have asked the teachers themselves, and they said if there was only one part they can take
THINKING OF STARTING A BUSINESS?

By RAMA DHONANTO
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE most common mistake made by people who are just starting up their business is that they are too focused on the products way too early.

Don’t get me wrong, your product is important, it’s the source of revenue for the business and it is sitting on the front line with your customers. But the painful truth is, nobody cares about your product! Not in the early stages anyway. Your product means nothing if you don’t know who it is for, why you create it, and how you sell it.

There are, in essence, three main things you should know before you start building your products for your business:

1 KNOWING YOURSELF
   This may sound simple, but it can cost you tremendously (financially and mentally), if you get it all wrong. Your business defines who you are, it’s the definition of all the learning you’ve done in the past.

   First, be fully aware of what you are passionate about and write it down. Remember, your passion is not the same as your hobby. Hobbies are the things you enjoy doing. Passion is something you deeply care about and there is a huge curiosity to dig even more.

   Your passion can be a specific task, a particular industry, or the way you present your business. For example, I have a passion in sport, retail, and the digital industry. Hence why, Sportdeca was born.

   Most people assume they know their customers better than anyone else, but it’s not just what you know about your customers, it’s more about what your customers know about you. The best way to know your customers? Talk to them. No need to present your products. Just get to know what they really need, what can improve their lives, what they struggle with, and what help they would need.

2 KNOWING YOUR CUSTOMERS
   Who will buy your products? Where are they? Why would they buy from you? How do you communicate with them?

   Your customers are probably the most important element of your business. However, people tend to underestimate the power of customer research.

   Most people assume they know their customers better than anyone else. But knowing your customers is crucial to your decision making. Most people assume they know their customers better than anyone.

3 KNOWING THE MARKET
   How big is the market size? How much is the annual growth? Who are your competitors? What is your competitive advantage? How will the future look like?

   Unless you have been in the industry years, there is no ‘enough’ when it comes market analysis. You need to dig deep into your market place.

   When I started Sportdeca, I spent days analysing the potential market in sports and e-commerce industries. I took time to talk with the experts, so I could get more detailed insights.

   Data will be very valuable when you decide which direction you want to choose for the business and define your entrance strategy to the market. Remember, it’s the market that defines your business, not the other way around.

   Rama Dhonanto is a serial entrepreneur in the tech and telco industry, who has raised several companies from zero to million-dollar valuation. A mentor, advisor, and guest lecturer at top universities and digital companies in Indonesia, he is currently serving as a CEO for Heroleads Indonesia. To connect with him, drop us an email at editor@leaderonomics.com.

In today’s business world, you need to be able to walk in the shoes of your customer; to find clues and collect artefacts that build a whole picture of your customers’ experiences. Here’s why understanding your customers is crucial to your business:

NEW COUNTRY GENERAL MANAGER

Caroline Ong has been appointed Leaderonomics Country General Manager, Malaysia. She expands her portfolio to oversee operations in Malaysia after serving nearly two years as Director of Client Engagement.

Leaderonomics Group Chief Executive Officer Roshan Thiran will focus on strengthening the organisation to support expansion plans.

LEADERONOMICS SCORES

The HD Leaderonomics football team led by captain Roshan Thiran (centre, in red) and managed by Pravin Nair (far right) after the Masters Football League (MFL) Cup final at the Ardence Arena in Seri Alam last Saturday, where the team won 4-3 against Beluga FC.

Curiosity is sometimes not encouraged in our lives. Yet curiosity is a high determinant of success and progress in one’s journey through life. Eva Christidoulou shares about the importance of curiosity in one’s leadership journey: bit.ly/RGYbeingcurious.

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!
HOW TO BUILD GREAT RELATIONSHIPS

HOW TO BUILD GREAT RELATIONSHIPS

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A R R E N B u f f e t t o n c e s a id, “The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything.” In a way, he’s right. (Anyone worth more than USD 60 bil clearly gets a few things right.)

Still, saying “no” so you can focus on doing a few things really well still doesn’t guarantee success. But this does.

As Buffett tells college students: “When you get to be my age, you will be successful if the people who you hope to have love you, do love you.”

Clearly that’s true where family and friends are concerned. In fact, research shows you’ll definitely be more successful if you marry the right person.

Substitute ‘like’ for ‘love’, though, and it’s also true in business.

Skills, education, experience where success is concerned — all those things and more matter. But one thing matters more. True success — the kind of success that also results in happiness — isn’t possible if you don’t build great relationships. (Sure, you can be self-serving, obnoxious, and insufferable and still get rich. But you’ll be rich and lonely.)

Plus, it’s a lot easier to be successful if people like you — when your employees, your customers, your partners, and your colleagues not only hope you succeed, but without being asked, actively help you succeed.

Those kinds of relationships don’t just make you successful in business. They make you successful in life and a lot happier.

Here are some simple ways to be the kind of person who feels successful:

1. Help without being asked

Most people lend a hand when someone asks. Very few people offer help before they are asked, even though most of the time, that’s when a little help can make the biggest difference.

When you see someone struggling, offer to help, but not in that vague, “Is there something I can do to help you?” way. Offer specific ways you can help, because then you can push past the reflexive, “No, I’m okay” responses. And you can roll up your sleeves and make a real impact in another person’s life.

Not because you hope someday, the favour will be returned, but just because you care.

2. Answer the question behind the question

Many people ask a different question than the one they want answered.

Employers used to ask me if they should take a business class; what they really wanted to know was whether I thought he could get in shape to ride it (he was and did).

Behind many simple questions is often a larger question that goes unasked. Look for the unasked question, and answer that one, too. Then the people around you will know you care about what they ask, and you care about them.

3. Show a lot more patience

Showing patience is a wonderful way to let people know we care about them.

Showing patience and expressing genuine confidence is a wonderful way to let people know we believe in them.

In time, you’ll build relationships with people who think the same way, and have great professional relationships, which is the surest path to success no matter how you define it.

JAMIE ANDREW

Leading from The Edge

Despite losing his hands and his feet in a climbing accident at the age of 29, Jamie Andrew has achieved the seemingly impossible: running marathons, completing an ironman triathlon, skiing, snowboarding, sailing, and of course mountain climbing.

Jamie has inspired people across more than 30 countries through his 13 years of speaking experience where he tells his story with great passion, sincerity, and humour.

As a regular presenter for The International Institute of Management Development in Switzerland on several programmes, including the hugely popular High Performance Leadership course, Jamie uses his experiences as a mountaineer in relation to principles of successful business practice. His sessions are gripping, inspiring, and uplifting — addressing the following topics:

LEADERSHIP | MANAGING CHANGE | RESILIENCE | MOTIVATION | GOAL SETTING | TEAMWORK | ACCEPTING CHALLENGE

Book a session with Jamie Andrew for your organisation today!
Available dates: 28 March – 8 April 2019

For enquiries, email info@leaderonomics.com

Jeff Haden is a speaker, ghostwriter and author of The Motivation Myth: How Highly Successful People Really Set Themselves Up to Win. Connect with him by sending us an email at editor@leaderonomics.com

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