

MARCH 2019



# Leaderonomics

*The Science of Building Leaders*



# Extending the Right Welcome

Integrating new hires into the organisation



**P**REPARING to welcome new hires doesn't stop at just a welcome address, a stack of new business cards and equipment; it extends far further than that. The business onboarding process is one that pays attention to integrating a new employee into a company's culture, environment, community and vision.

More often than not, this isn't a one-size-fits-all procedure.

This process ensures that new employees fully understand their roles, job scopes, and how they contribute value to the organisation's operations – the big picture. During this time, new employees go into the details of what is expected of them, how they should deliver, and also how and when they will be evaluated.

Once they're fully prepared, they no longer have to involve themselves in anxiety-inducing guesswork in their new working environment and this ensures smoother operations and people relations within the workplace.

In this month's issue, we look at the various ways that organisations can focus on making the onboarding process meaningful and lasting.

Sandeep Olkar writes specifically on how a meticulously-designed onboarding programme for senior leaders can reduce – if not eliminate – the failure rate of senior hires.

He examines the effectiveness of using a role-based approach to the onboarding process and expanding the entire exercise into a wide range that covers various types of roles.

Meanwhile, Jessica Thiefels presents several interesting ways to turn the onboarding process into a more collaborative one. Among them are soliciting and tracking feedback from anyone who was involved, including co-workers and managers; building a community at the workplace, and developing a mentorship programme.

Many other insightful articles on workplace relations and employee retention await you in this issue. Do you have a memorable onboarding story to share? Let us know by writing to us at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com). We'd love to hear from you.

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## Leadership lessons from a Renaissance master

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Research shows that an efficient and well-structured onboarding programme leads to higher retention of employees. One way to optimise onboarding is to make it collaborative, so that you engage both the new hire and your current staff.

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By ROSHAN THIRAN

roshan.thiran@leaderonomics.com

*The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.*  
– Michelangelo

THE works of Michelangelo (born Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni) are familiar to most of us. The statue of David (inset), the painting of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and St Peter's Basilica in Rome are just a few of his famous masterpieces that draw admirers from around the world.

Michelangelo (1475–1564) was born into a family that claimed aristocratic roots. His father worked for the Florentine government, and despaired at his son's inclinations towards the arts. At the time, it was viewed as a lowly profession, and certainly unsuitable for the son of a government official.

Regardless of his father's strong opposition to his passion, the young Michelangelo, at the age of 14, drew the attention of Florentine leader Lorenzo de' Medici, who invited the blossoming artist to reside at his home.

Michelangelo would subsequently learn from noted intellectuals and artists of the day, and the insights he gained from his time in the Medici home would influence his work throughout his life.

It was during this time that Michelangelo honed his skills as a sculptor under the renowned Bertoldo di Giovanni, who was himself known for his sculptures. Although Michelangelo would become known for his painting and architecture, he considered himself a sculptor first and foremost.

In terms of his personality, Michelangelo was – to put it mildly – often difficult. He was fiercely critical of his own work and experienced frequent mood swings. Although he became wealthy, he was neither known for his fashion sense nor hygiene, and he preferred to lead a life of solitude, interacting with others only when necessary.

One of his most famous works of art, the Sistine Chapel ceiling – which attracts more than 20,000 visitors *per day* during Rome's summer months – has been described as “a cornerstone work of High Renaissance art”. However, Michelangelo was, as usual, critical about the awesome work he produced, writing in one letter, “I am not a painter.”

Interestingly, the commission to paint the Sistine Chapel ceiling wasn't originally intended for Michelangelo, but rather his rival, the younger (and more personable) Raphael. The latter – in an attempt to discredit Michelangelo as a painter – convinced Pope Julius II to give the commission to his rival instead, hoping that he would fall from grace and be seen as nothing more than a sculptor.

Unfortunately for Raphael, Michelangelo spent the following four years (1508–1512) creating sublime frescoes that would reveal his genius as an all-round artist to audiences for centuries to come.

Despite the end result, Michelangelo faced numerous challenges in painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling. For a start, he had to learn the difficult process of painting in fresco – something he had never done before.

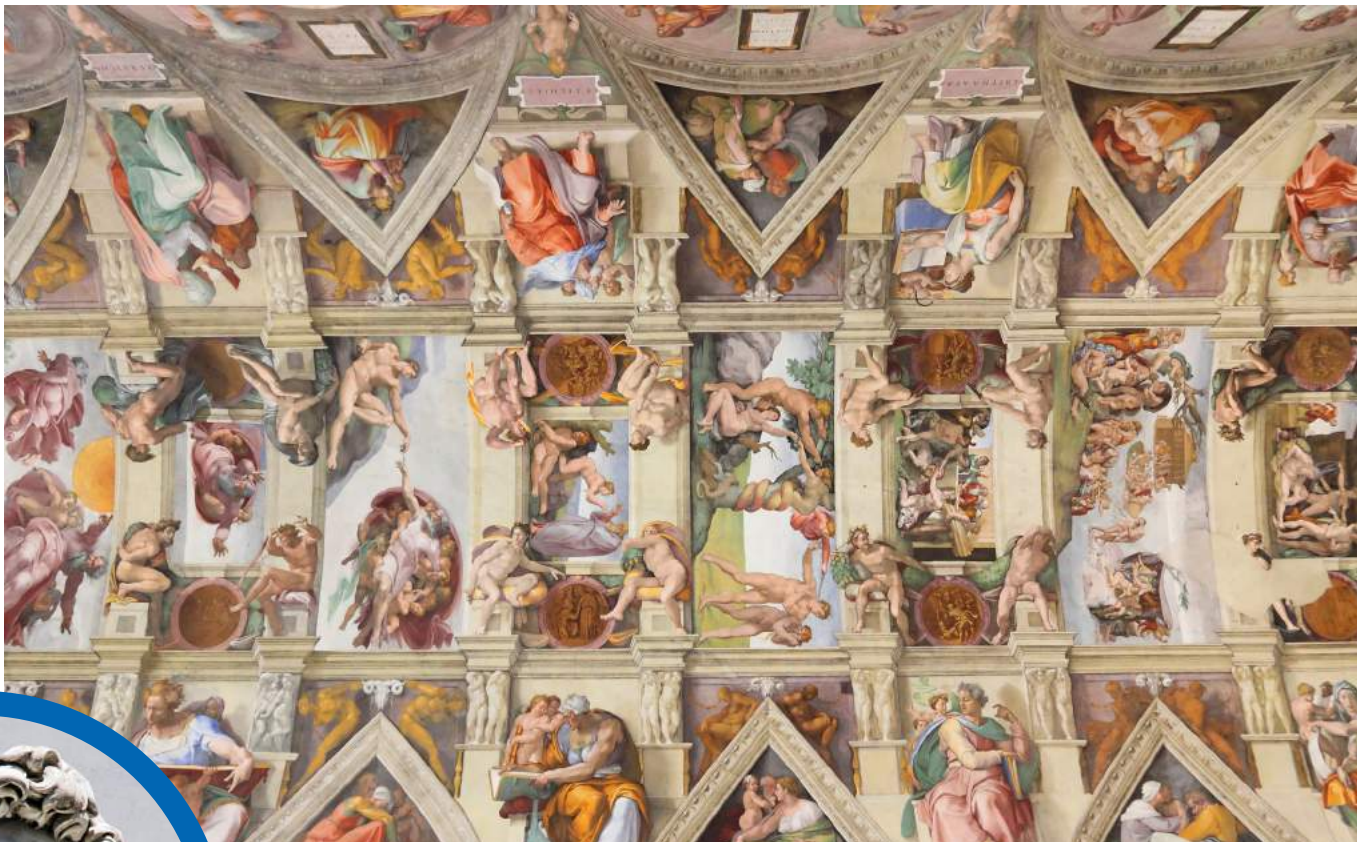
He also had to find a way to create a suitable structure that would allow him to paint, standing high above the ground. He spent long periods craning his neck in order to paint, which inevitably caused him tremendous pain and emotional distress.

Michelangelo also found mould on the ceiling as he progressed in the project. He begged the Pope to allow him to quit, reiterating that he wasn't a painter. However, the Pope summoned an expert to show the artist how the mould could be removed, and Michelangelo carried the work on to completion.

As a man, Michelangelo could be difficult, stubborn, and single-minded. As an artist, he showed his genius across several mediums, and yet he endured a constant struggle with perfection.

His work drew admiration from all walks of life, but the Italian master was forever pushing himself towards perfection, which meant he never produced any work

# Leadership Lessons from Michelangelo



The Sistine Chapel ceiling in Vatican, Rome.



that was less than extraordinary.

While we needn't pursue our passions quite as fervently as Michelangelo, the example of his life shows that when we strive to be the best that we possibly can be, we can manifest great achievements that in turn inspire and empower others to develop their best selves.

From the life of this great artist, there are many lessons that can push us beyond our perceived limitations and on to greatness, whatever that means for each of us.

Here are five leadership lessons from the life and times of the Renaissance master:

## 1 Achievement takes time – and hard work

As leaders, it can often be a frustrating process to have an idea in mind and not see it come to fruition quickly. Particularly with long-term goals, we need to realise that it requires time and dedication to achieve or to master anything worthwhile. As the Italian master himself put it, “If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all.”

## 2 Use your time wisely... it's a finite source

Successful entrepreneurs are always goal-oriented. They recognise the need to utilise their waking hours as efficiently as possible if they're to make substantial progress. In Michelangelo's time, an artist's reputation was only as good as their last commission, and so they were compelled to continually hone their craft, develop and grow their talent. Michelangelo offers us this warning, “There is no greater harm than that of time wasted.”

## 3 Growth is limited only by your imagination

One of the ways in which the iconic artists of history are distinguished from many others is their imagination and belief in their capabilities. Primarily a sculptor, Michelangelo was viewed by some as an absurd choice to paint the Sistine Chapel ceiling – but he took on the challenge with the belief that no other could do a better job.

How many of us would take on a daring challenge outside our comfort zones? In reality, what we are

capable of doing is far more than what we think we are capable of. In the words of the great artist, “Your greatness is measured by your horizons.”

## 4 Know your strengths and you'll find your talent

Michelangelo knew what psychologists are now telling us: we flourish best when we put our strengths to use in whatever we do. Being proactive in making sure our capabilities align with whatever role we find ourselves in not only ensures a higher likelihood of producing quality work, but also boosts our engagement and well-being.

As Michelangelo advised, “Your gifts lie in the place where your values, passions, and strengths meet. Discovering that place is the first step toward sculpting your masterpiece, Your Life.”

## 5 Be different... always

In 1501, Michelangelo was commissioned to sculpt a statue of David by the city fathers of Florence, as a symbol of the city's courage against its enemies (Florence was constantly attacked by larger city states and David, the Biblical character would represent their defiance to these enemies).

Most artists at that time would have depicted David right after he slew Goliath, but Michelangelo decided to be different. He chose to sculpt David the young man, just before he encountered the giant Goliath.

He rationalised that David had two choices before he confronted Goliath – to run away in fear or stand firm and fight. This David was the ‘real’ David – a vision of a man not paralysed by fear, but standing up boldly in his hour of ‘terror’.

He even sculpted David with a larger right hand, symbolising his ability to control and shape a new world. This statue of David would be a turning point in the birth of the new Europe – and a move away from the Dark Ages. And because he was different, he has been called the ‘father of the Renaissance’.



Roshan Thiran is the founder and CEO of the Leaderonomics Group and is constantly amazed by the numerous leadership lessons he derives from historical figures and celebrities, including artists. He hopes his writing will inspire others to make a difference in this world and leave a positive legacy too. Follow Roshan's daily adventures and leadership tips on his LinkedIn, Twitter and also Facebook page.



# 4 Things That Keep Employees Motivated

By **KWAN-ANN LIM**  
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**P**ING! The familiar sound of a new email arriving in my inbox momentarily distracts me from the task at hand. A box at the bottom right hand corner of my screen pops up with a familiar subject. “Not again,” I think to myself.

**Subject:** Changes in staff structure

Hi team,  
We are writing to inform you of some recent staffing changes. Sarah has recently decided to leave to pursue further studies at AIT University and will be replaced by Joyce. Sarah will continue to work with us on a part time basis. Paul is also leaving for other opportunities with potential international travel.

We wish Sarah and Paul all the best in their new adventures.

Regards,  
Head of People and Culture

The first time this happened, I didn't think too much about it. But when it happened for the fifth time in three months, my mind could not help but wonder why people were leaving.

Is it the company culture? The way employees are being treated? Should I start looking for something else too?

## Why employees leave

Employee turnover rates come at a high cost to an organisation – additional training, onboarding, interviewing and advertising expenses, as well as impact on employee morale and engagement. For that reason, every time someone leaves I try to ascertain the reason for their departure. Here are some of the sentiments I have received.

*I left because I was fed up of the way my manager treated me. I am used to getting full autonomy when managing projects and dealing with stakeholders but now I feel suffocated as she micro-manages everything I do. This is not how I envisioned I would spend my working life.*

*I left because I once asked to be sent on a self-improvement conference but was flat-out refused. Every time I try to take the initiative to make the company a better place, my boss not only doesn't appreciate it, he dampens my efforts.*

*All I wanted was recognition for my work. There doesn't seem to be a system that rewards performance in this company, so it doesn't motivate me to want to do more and be better for the company. I knew it was time to move on.*

Natural attrition is healthy in an organisation and is a way to prevent disengaged employees from overstay-ing. But when you have top-performing employees leaving, this is a cause for concern, and employers must review their management practices.

There are two reasons people leave: their personal circumstances have evolved and they have no choice but to move on, or they have passed the point of merely tolerating the current environment and want change.

## What motivates employees?

There is a saying in the Bible: for where your treasure is; there your heart will be also. Different things motivate us all and this is dependent on one's values and priorities.

Here are four important things that will help your employees feel appreciated and like they belong.

### 1 Trust and autonomy – being given responsibility

Nothing empowers a person more than being entrusted with something important – a responsibility that they know is bigger than what they are qualified for.

I remember the first time I was asked to lead a small team; I was taken aback that they thought me fit enough to be a leader of this group of 20 people. While I was thrown into the deep end, it made me want to give 110% and it pushed me to rise to the occasion.

One of the best ways to keep a good employee is to give them the freedom to do what is needed while ensuring they have a good support system.

### 2 Purpose and impact – being able to make a difference

In every human being is the innate desire to make a difference in the world. Doctors are held in high-esteem because they save lives.

Every year, thousands join the military to serve their country despite the apparent risk and danger. The way to motivate someone to be passionate about even the most mundane tasks is to connect them to the why.

I do not naturally enjoy repetitive or mundane tasks but when I focus on the why, it helps me build the endurance to last the distance.

### 3 Recognition and commendation – being shown appreciation

Whether this comes in the form of monetary rewards or verbal affirmation, being appreciated means being valued. In one of the organisations I worked in, there was a good recognition programme, but the problem was that it had become a check-the-box exercise.

Employees (including myself) became aware of that, and it lost its effectiveness. Recognition is important,

but it must be in the right way. Some like cash bonuses, others simply like to be told they have done a good job.

Employers must create an honest culture of effective recognition in order to engage their best employees.

### 4 Flexible work arrangements – being able to have work-life balance

As a mother, work-life balance is not just a concept, but a reality that is especially dear to me. This includes having the option to work from home, flexible hours tailored to my lifestyle, and picking projects that do not require travel.

However, this no longer just applies to mothers. Millennials nowadays want to be their own boss; it is rarely about the money but about passion and what is fulfilling.

In a world where opportunities are abundant, millennials feel less need to stick to one job when they can use the Internet and social media to create something out of nothing.

Therefore, employers need to be able to cater to a wide range of lifestyles and be flexible in their approach. This, of course, is assuming the essentials to get a job done is already in place.

For example, a functioning laptop and mobile phone that syncs to one's calendar are highly important for a management consultant who deals with an extensive number of clients and a flurry of meetings each day.

Or, the simple necessity of being paid on time and having a safe workplace culture where bullying is not tolerated. Without these bare essentials, none of the above will make a difference.

## Final thoughts

Employers must continually strive to provide a good environment for their employees before it is too late. What if they leave, you ask? But what if they stay?

The cost is too high to ignore. Employees leaving may be part of the work-life cycle, but we must not be the reason for it.

On the flip side, as an employee, we must stay engaged and passionate about our jobs. We can take the initiative to help our employers get better by maintaining a feedback loop and establishing a healthy work culture from the bottom up.

When we find ourselves losing passion and dread starts to sink in on Sunday nights – perhaps we are better off looking for a new job than wasting our employers' time and money.

Both employers and employees are equally responsible for maintaining a great job experience. Both must work in tandem to make the working world a better place, and that starts with proactively building a culture of trust, recognition, flexibility and purpose from the top down and bottom up.

■ This article was previously published in print.



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# Small Changes That Create Huge Leaps

By **DR AMANTHA IMBER**  
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**E**VERY minute of every work day, there are several (or, in fact, many) managers who are inadvertently killing their team's productivity. They are doing this through expecting their team to be at their beck and call, responding to instant messages or emails within a few minutes.

They do this by constantly interrupting their team – because it's okay for managers to interrupt people, isn't it? And they spread out many, many meetings across the course of the week, many of which are not helping anyone make progress on their most important projects.

Indeed, Adobe's Consumer Email Survey, conducted across 1000 white collar workers, showed we spend 2.5 hours in our inbox per day. And when it comes to meetings, research published in the MIT Sloan Management Review revealed that executives spend 23 hours per week in meetings – and their subordinates are probably not that far behind.

But often, when we talk about improving productivity, common sense suggests that to achieve big gains, we need to make big changes.

Yet, what we know from fields such as cognitive psychology and behavioural economics is that small changes can lead to big leaps forward in performance. I call this micro-productivity – tiny changes that can lead to huge improvements in the way we work.

If you manage a team, here are three simple micro-productivity tactics you can try that will have a dramatic impact on your team's performance.

## 1 Ask your team to work to their chronotype

Do you know which members of your team are morning versus evening people? Which ones are firing on all cylinders in the morning? And which ones come to life at night? If you don't know this information, then you need to get to know it because this has huge implications for performance.

Around 14 per cent of the population are Larks, the type of people who are bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at 6am. Another 21 per cent are Owls, who peak in the evening. And the rest of us are 'middle birds' and fall somewhere in between.

Once you know where individuals sit on this scale, encourage them to structure their day based on their chronotype. Let your Larks start work as early as they

like, but this means letting them leave early too. And encourage your Owls to do the opposite.

Larks and middle birds are best suited to doing focused and analytical work in the mornings, and then less cognitively intense work in the afternoons. For Owls, their days should be structured in the opposite manner.

On my team at Inventium, I have a couple of Larks who regularly start work between 4 to 5am, when their brains are firing, and finish a bit after lunchtime.

By encouraging your team to work to their individual chronotypes, you'll boost performance significantly by aligning people's natural in-built clocks with work tasks.

## 2 Allocate one distraction-free hour a day

The average team starts the day in reactive mode. Emails and Slack are checked at the start of the day, which puts everyone on the back foot, playing whack-a-mole with their inbox to try to achieve the elusive inbox zero and attempting to respond to everyone's requests for their time.

And come the end of the day, we wonder why it's so common to think to ourselves 'what on earth did I achieve today?'

If this sounds like your team, you need to help them protect at least one hour of their day where they can work proactively on their most important projects without interruption. Ideally, it's the first hour of the day before incoming messages start competing for their attention.

To kick things off, send out a calendar invite to your team titled 'Distraction-Free Hour'. Block this out in everyone's diary for the first hour of their workday (note that for Owls, their hour of power should be at the end of the day). Giving people permission to stay out of their inboxes and protecting this time from meetings will allow your team to get a big chunk of deep and focused work done.

You'll see that people will use this time to make big steps forward on their projects, and as an

added bonus, this creates a much more energising start to the day compared to getting buried in emails.

After your team has mastered its hour of power, you might start to build up to 90 minutes or even two hours. The more time you set aside for focused and uninterrupted work, the greater the productivity gains you'll see.

## 3 Batch meetings

As a manager, you are probably responsible for setting many of the meetings that your team attends. Many managers don't give much thought to the timing of meetings. Indeed, all that often matters is that all attendees are free at the allocated time. However, by not giving thought to the timing of meetings, you are unwittingly killing productivity.

Researchers from Ohio State University conducted a series of experiments which showed that when people have a meeting coming up within an hour or two, the time in between is used much less productively. One of their studies found that when people had a meeting coming up, they got 22 per cent less work done in the time before the meeting started compared to if they didn't have a meeting approaching.

To boost productivity, batch your team's meetings. You might decide to allocate two or three afternoons per week that are specifically for meetings, or you might want to keep meetings to only occurring during certain hours of the day, such as between 2 to 4pm.

By batching meetings, you will eliminate the 'dead' time that happens when meetings are scattered randomly throughout every work day.

All three of these changes should be quick and easy to implement, but the changes that will spring from any one of them will be enormous.



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By **JESSE LYN STONER**  
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*Mark was upbeat at the end of his first day at his new job as a programmer for a small tech company. He was shown around, introduced to his co-workers, and given a desk and a computer. He had spent most of the day alone and settling in, which was fine with him.*

*A few days later, he wasn't so upbeat. He had been given an interesting assignment, but he wasn't sure how it fit with the overall project, and he wasn't sure how to do some of the work. He was concerned about asking too many questions because he wanted to look like he knew what he was doing. By the end of the week, Mark was seriously wondering whether he had taken the right job.*

**M**OST large companies have processes for onboarding and integrating new hires (how well they are implemented is a different issue).

However, smaller companies tend to be *laissez-faire* about how they bring on new employees. They are often more flexible, innovative and resilient because they are less bureaucratic and allow more individual freedom. But when it comes to onboarding new employees, they pay a huge price.

Eager new employees quickly become demotivated when they don't understand what they need to do to be successful. The opportunity to capitalise on their initial energy is lost. It takes longer to integrate them, and it's not uncommon for them to quit in frustration – 16 per cent of new hires quit after the first week.

Many managers do a fairly good job explaining the

## 3 Tips for Smooth Onboarding

basics to new employees. You find out where your desk is, you get a computer, and are shown where the printer, copier and supplies are. And if you're lucky, you might be shown how to use them.

But successful onboarding is about learning the ropes, and that involves more than a quick overview.

### Don't play 'Battleship' with new employees

Too often, getting on board is like playing the game of 'Battleship'. You win the game if you can keep at least one of your ships from getting sunk. The problem is, it's a guessing game – you don't know where your opponent's ships are and even if you win, you learn by making mistakes and will lose at least some of your ships.

That's no way to learn a new job – having to figure out how things work by making mistakes.

Here are three simple ways managers can successfully (and quickly) onboard new employees:

### 1 Provide a clear explanation about the specific work assignment

Provide clear information not just about the company goals and the overall work, but even more importantly, about the new employee's work assignments – what they are expected to do on their own, where they need to coordinate with others, what

resources are available, what the deliverables are and when they are due.

### 2 Invite questions

Recognise that new employees are reluctant to ask too many questions. Don't just have an 'open door', where people are welcome to come in anytime. Ask employees what's working, what's confusing, and what's challenging. Make it okay to ask questions. Explain that there is no such thing as a 'dumb question' – that questions are a sign of learning and that you expect them to ask questions.

### 3 Assign a peer mentor

Ask a team member to help the new employee get the lay of the land and to explain the informal rules – make this a formal role. Choose someone with good social skills and who wants the new employee to be successful.



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By RIDDHI PARIKH MEHTA  
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# 5 Lessons from the Life of Chetna Sinha

## What women can learn from the Indian social activist

**A**T The Economic Times (ET) Women's Forum in 2018, I heard a story about a bank that provided doorstep banking as well as digital banking using biometrics, which also had a radio programme with its own radio jockey.

The story of how this bank began is rather moving – it starts with Chetna Gala Sinha, a young lady from Mumbai who fell in love with a dynamic farmer and moved to Mhaswad, a small village in Maharashtra, India.

Coming from a comfortable and well-educated upbringing in the city to a tiny village with no running water or toilet, the transition to Mhaswad in 1987 was difficult for Chetna, and even more so for her family, who were horrified at her decision.

The story takes a twist one day when a local blacksmith lady came to her asking for help. She wanted to open a savings account at the local bank and save Rs10 per day (that's less than USD0.15).

While Chetna questioned how someone who sleeps on the streets would be able to save, Kantabai (the local blacksmith lady) was determined to open the bank account to do so.

Chetna accompanied her to the bank, but the bank refused; the amount was too small. This led to Chetna forming the Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank, the first rural women's bank.

As a follower of political leader Jayaprakash Narayan, she was driven by social causes. However, opening a bank didn't come easy. When she went to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI, the central body for banking in India), her application was rejected on the grounds that some of the members were illiterate.

### The power of a strong will

Chetna was disappointed that the RBI rejected the application, but the rural women said: "Why are you so sad? We are illiterate now, but we will become literate and come back."

Every day for four months, the rural women studied after their long days at work and soon re-applied for the banking license. This time, they also challenged the bank officials to see who could calculate the interest on any principal amount faster – them or the bank officials. In the end, the bank officials had no reason to not grant them the license.

Their bank was set up and supported the rural women; however, enrolments stagnated and then dwindled because the women had to walk miles to get to the bank.

That's when Chetna started doorstep banking, and when the digital wave swept the country, she introduced digital banking. However, the rural women refused to do banking with four-digit pin codes; they asked her to come back with a better solution.

Hence, Chetna introduced biometric banking, using thumb prints to complete transactions. The rural women hailed this, saying: "People can steal my PIN, but not my thumb for sure."

Chetna says that one lesson she took away from that was to never provide poor solutions to poor people, as they are very smart.

While Chetna and the Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank continue to do inspirational work for the women in rural Maharashtra, here are my takeaways from her journey:

### 1 You can do something for every issue

When Kantabai came to Chetna, she didn't give up just because the bank refused to open an account for the blacksmith. Instead, the Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank came into being *because* the banker said no to Kantabai.

Ola Cabs came into being when Bhavish Aggarwal didn't manage to find a cab to go home after work. Tribe bags came into being when Priya Rege felt that there were no stylish and functional bags for women to carry to work. InstaReM, the instant money transfer company, came into being when Prajit Nanu had a frustrating experience transferring money from India to book a resort in Thailand.

When you face a challenge or an issue, go ahead and use it to your advantage.

### 2 There is inspiration all around you

When the RBI rejected her application, it's the inspirational women around Chetna that kept her going. It's not always possible to find inspiration within us, but if we look around, there will be ample sources.

Albert Einstein, an inspiration for millions, took inspiration from Gandhi and vice versa. Author and entrepreneur Michael Masterson says that friends, family and the people around him make him want to be a better person.

Inspiration to do more and do better for ourselves and others is always available; we just need to let it encourage us.

### 3 Courage is a key ingredient

Brene Brown describes it well: "You can choose courage or you can choose comfort. You cannot have both." A couple of years back, my colleague and I signed up for a project which we didn't know much about, in a place that was unknown to us, and in an industry which was predominantly male. We did show courage by boarding a 5am flight, and had one of our most wonderful and satisfying projects over six months.

"Their courage is my capital," says Chetna of the rural women whom her bank serves, "and if you want, it can be yours too." I think we can all use the courage capital.

### 4 The sky is the limit

Chetna's work started with building a bank, to starting a school, cattle camps, and more. Amazon started as a book store and Apple as a personal computer company; closer to home, Reliance Industries had first started as a textile company.

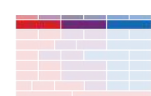
Each of us may not be the next Steve Jobs or Jeff Bezos, but we can expand business to new cities and countries. Take a new job in a new industry, work in a foreign land. By being purposeful, the drive to keep going can take us soaring to the sky.

### 5 It's all about love

Let me put my last lesson out here too: Choose a partner whom you love passionately, then even a village without the basic requirements can be the right place to start something amazing.



*Riddhi has over 15 years of experience in various business roles, including talent management, human resources, sales, and business development. She is a director of Leaderonomics India, helping organisations develop their leaders as well as support the growth of leaders of all ages across India. She is a trainer, facilitator and leadership development specialist who is passionate about building leaders at every level. To connect with her, email us at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).*



**MORAL CHARACTER** These are character traits that are deemed to make an individual a 'good' human being. Understanding our values and our strengths in the character traits related to them will enable us to learn how to lead ourselves first, how to lead our teams, and ultimately, how to lead organisations. This includes integrity, generosity, sportsmanship, justice, gratitude. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to [bit.ly/SOBLP1](http://bit.ly/SOBLP1) to find out more.





By **CHRISTINE COMAFORD**  
editor@leaderonomics.com

ONE of the key topics I'm asked about frequently these days is unconscious bias training.

More and more studies come in every day that show diverse and inclusive teams (more on what that means later) consistently outperform teams made up of people who are very similar to each other.

So, it's time to bust unconscious biases in business – and that's the tricky part.

While millions of training dollars have been spent over the past 30-plus years on diversity, there is surprisingly little proof of results.

In fact, the gender and racial diversity training we might be familiar with from the late 80s and 90s was widely reported to have had an adverse effect!

It raised awareness of people's differences but didn't provide behavioural change strategies.

A study of 829 companies over 31 years showed that diversity training had 'no positive effects in the average workplace'.

At best, the study made some people more open to hiring those of other races, genders, and ethnicities. At its worst, it shamed people, resulting in some leaders banding together and enforcing their world view.

Fortunately, in the past few years, research based on organisations like the NeuroLeadership Institute have been studying not only how the brain creates biases but also what strategies successfully mitigate them in organisations.

One thing they have noticed is that while a group of similar people feels better for its members, a diverse group consistently performs better, making it clearly worth our while to figure out the bias conundrum.

### We are all unconscious – and a bit biased

All human beings are biased.

It's a natural state of the brain that evolved from the days when we needed to be able to calculate very quickly if something was like us and thus friendly, or unlike us and possibly dangerous.

In fact, the brain has far more (three to four times as much!) real estate devoted to identifying threats, than to identifying opportunities and rewards.

There are over 150 different types of biases and all have their roots in the structure of the brain.

Biases are part of what keeps us sane and able to process the enormous amount of information that we are bombarded with at any point in time.

In a Google presentation on bias, they estimated that at any point in time, our brain is processing some 11 million bits of information and we can only consciously process 40 bits – the rest gets handled by our unconscious mind, which makes us 99.999996 per cent unconscious.

That part of us has learnt the unconscious biases to delete (ignore some information and not make it conscious), distort (emphasise or fade other information), and generalise (Gosh! That switch looks just like the switch I used to turn on the lights in the other room, so, it too is a light switch).

If we were not able to form unconscious biases and delete, distort, and generalise accordingly, we would probably go crazy pretty darned fast.

Since we are all naturally biased, there's no need to feel ashamed of it, though there's a very profound business case for ensuring that we mitigate or entirely remove our biases in certain situations.

### Diversity plus inclusion

Many people think that diversity is simply about having a diverse team, one that has representatives from different genders, races and ethnicities.

While that is a start, according to Heidi Grant-Halvorson, PhD, of the NeuroLeadership Institute, "Diversity is getting asked to the party, while inclusion is getting asked to dance at the party."

Human infants have a very long period of being dependent on the adults of their 'tribe'. If we are socially ostracised from the group, we feel physical pain.

This is instinct, and we automatically mirror the behaviours of others from birth in order to belong and therefore survive.

When our belonging is threatened, when we are ostracised or excluded, we enter what I call 'Critter State'. When the brain is under threat, it literally cannot function in the same way that it does when it feels safe,

# Unconscious Biases in Your Organisation



when it is in the 'Smart State.'

When we feel under threat, studies have shown that we release an enzyme that has been found to attack the hippocampus which is responsible for regulating synapses.

So, our brain:

- reduces the field of view and focuses only on a narrow span of what it must do to survive. Myelin sheathing increases on existing neural pathways and we are less likely to try new solutions.
- shrinks its working memory, so that it is not distracted by other ideas, bits of information, stray thoughts... Think of a student panicked by a pop quiz; the information is there but they cannot access it. This means they cannot problem-solve optimally.
- is less creative. With less grey matter and modified synapses, we experience fewer ideas, thoughts, and information available to 'bump into each other' so the capacity to create is reduced.
- enlarges the amygdala, the area of the brain responsible for fear processing and threat perception, making us more likely to be reactive rather than controlled.
- is less likely to connect with others. Fight, flight or freeze is not really a sharing kind of activity. When the synapses have been modified in this way, we appear grumpy and unsociable.

To get the benefits of diversity, we must promote the 'Smart State' by including, including and including. And here's the catch:

### Humans never communicate as clearly as they think they do

It's actually quite a miracle that we understand anything about each other at all.

How many times a week, a day, or even an hour have you had the experience of thinking you understood or were understood, only to find a complete disconnect?

So, you may think you are including, but if you are not consciously including someone who is not confident about their place in your inner circle, they may feel rejected or not welcome.

To truly promote diversity and inclusion, it is absolutely critical to train your team in effective communication skills.

Techniques like rapport, inquiry mode and feedback allow people to get to know each other as individuals, not as ethnic, race or gender groups.

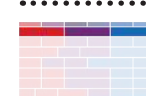
And that, my friends, is the secret to having diverse teams with lots of inclusion, and to busting bias.

Awareness alone doesn't work, but structures which prevent biases and the creation of skilled communication patterns and habits do.

All human beings are biased. It's a natural state of the brain that evolved from the days when we needed to be able to calculate very quickly if something was like us and thus friendly, or unlike us and possibly dangerous.



Christine Comaford is a leadership and culture coach. She is best known for helping her clients create predictable revenue, deeply engaged and passionate teams, and highly profitable growth. To get in touch with her, e-mail us at **editor@leaderonomics.com**.



### SELF-AWARENESS AND IDENTITY FORMATION

The ability to understand one's own strengths, aspirations, limitations, wants and needs, and distinguish them or group them with others. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to [bit.ly/SOBLPt1](http://bit.ly/SOBLPt1) to find out more.



By V. S. RAVI

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**T**HE traffic light turns amber but instead of slowing down, a car speeds past it. Your mind immediately goes: "What a reckless driver!"

Why do we jump to conclusions so easily?

We tend to think the way we do because, like it or not, we all wear 'tinted glasses'. Social psychologists call these glasses **cognitive bias**. In this case, the specific brand of cognitive bias is fundamental attribution error.

**Fundamental attribution error** happens when we attribute other people's behaviour to their personal characteristics rather than to external circumstances. For example, we think that the speeding driver *must* be reckless (personal characteristic), instead of the possibility that he could be rushing an accident victim to the hospital (external circumstances).

### Bias in talent sourcing

How might fundamental attribution error affect you in an organisation?

Imagine this scenario: Both job applicants A and B are impressive. They are sharp, articulate and well-groomed. However, A has a higher grade point average (GPA) than B. The hiring manager automatically thinks: "I'll hire A."

Do you notice any shortcomings with the hiring manager's thinking?

The hiring manager probably assumes that the higher GPA is due to applicant A's superior abilities over B's (personal characteristic) rather than because A had graduated from a university that offered an easier curriculum, or because B had completed a much tougher programme at a more prestigious university (external circumstances).

Assessing an applicant's past performance without considering the level of job difficulty is one of the pitfalls that can prevent organisations from hiring the right or the best talent. Besides missing out on true top talent, you could be stuck with poor candidates who cost your organisation unnecessary loss of time, productivity and finances.

### Committing fundamental attribution error

If we are already aware about fundamental attribution error, then why do we still commit such an error?

There are two possible reasons.

Firstly, we sometimes have no choice but to make quick assessments in order to survive in a fast-paced environment. So, we rely on clues that we can immediately sense, such as the other person's mood, mannerisms and physical appearance. We might end up getting it wrong at times, but various situations require us to make an educated guess.

Secondly, our human nature of self-preservation causes us to instinctively blame others rather than ourselves whenever we are involved in a disagreement or conflict. This is an in-built mechanism to protect ourselves from being taken advantage of. However, we must not overdo it to the extent that we ourselves are the ones taking advantage of others.

### Do the professionals fare better?

Aren't corporate leaders and human resources (HR) professionals able to discern situational factors and assess people more objectively? Unfortunately, research results indicate otherwise.

A published research paper titled *Inflated Applicants: Attribution Errors in Performance Evaluation by Professionals* by Samuel A. Swift, Don A. Moore, Zachariah S. Sharek and Francesca Gino reveals that fundamental attribution error is so entrenched in our decision-making that even highly trained professionals such as hiring managers and school admissions officers are not spared from falling prey to it.

In that study, 23 professional admissions officers were asked to review nine candidates for MBA (Master of Business Administration) admission, who had graduated from nine different schools that were equivalent

# Why We Hire the Wrong Candidate



in terms of quality and selectivity. The only difference in the schools was that some were 'lenient' in terms of task difficulty, while the others were 'harsh'.

The outcome demonstrated that the admissions officers, including the seasoned ones, were biased towards candidates who performed better in easier tasks over those who performed less well in difficult tasks, despite being informed about each school's task difficulty.

Doing a similar study, the researchers roped in 129 business executives to evaluate 12 candidates for job promotion. Once again, the results showed that candidates who performed well in easier tasks had a higher selection rate than candidates who performed less well in harder tasks.

In both the aforementioned cases, decision makers underestimated or overlooked the external factors that influenced candidates' performance. If decision makers with substantial exposure and experience could inadvertently commit fundamental attribution error, then how much more careful would the rest of us have to be when sourcing for talent?

### Minimising errors

Now that we have a better understanding of fundamental attribution error, can we make a positive change in our daily conduct?

Yes, we can! On an interpersonal level, we can start by giving others the benefit of the doubt, in the same way we want others to do for us.

The funny thing is that, if we ourselves commit something questionable, we know how to justify our own behaviour by pointing a finger to external circumstances instead of at ourselves. For example, if we

had hired the wrong financial advisor without doing a background check, we would be quick to trumpet the candidate's deceit rather than our own negligence in due diligence.

On an organisational level, the management could assess employees' dispositional ability by taking into consideration Kurt Lewin's attributional equation:

$$\text{Behaviour} = f(\text{Disposition, Situation})$$

Lewin's attributional equation depicts that behaviour is a function of not only the person's disposition (personal characteristics) but also of the situation (external circumstances).

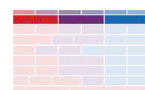
Understanding this will help us be more mature, accommodating and approachable leaders while endearing us to our peers and followers.

So, shed your tinted glasses today for clearer leadership vision!

■ This article was previously published in print.



Ravi is the founder and CEO of Invictus Leader. He is leading a movement that urges people to start intellect thinking, which nurtures the habit of processing what you learn by convergence of questioning, thinking and reasoning, not by simply accepting anything we are told. To connect with him, email us at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).



**BUILD TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES TO SUPPORT VISION** These competencies would be different for various individuals, depending on the needs of their specific roles at any given point in time, as well as working towards one's plans for the future. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to [bit.ly/SOBLPt1](https://bit.ly/SOBLPt1) to find out more.

We tend to think the way we do because, like it or not, we all wear 'tinted glasses'. Social psychologists call these glasses cognitive bias.



By **SANDEEP OLKAR**  
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**A** senior leader joins the company. Having come from a prestigious company and now in-charge of an important portfolio there are a lot of expectations from the leader.

After the initial euphoria dies down, a lot of murmurs start emerging about the leader's working style, review mechanisms, peer networking, etc. And soon the leader leaves the company.

Sounds familiar?

Isn't this a common scenario we see erupting occasionally in all companies? A study once estimated that nearly half of all external senior hires fail within 18 months in a new position.

In the corporate world where there is already a war for talent, such failures can have catastrophic consequences. A successful onboarding programme can reduce – if not eliminate – such failures.

Onboarding is commonly understood as the process of integrating a new employee into an organisation. Yet, different approaches and types of onboarding are seen across organisations.

The focus of this article is to understand some of the nuances that need to be considered while developing an onboarding programme for **senior hires or leaders**.

Before we delve into how we can make onboarding more effective for leaders, here are a few points to consider that emphasise the need for having an excellent onboarding programme.

#### New hire mindset

This is by far the most important but commonly ignored variable to be considered while designing an onboarding programme. We observe that many companies have a one-size-fits-all approach for onboarding.

If the company does mass hiring for sectors like information technology (IT) or information technology enabled services (ITES), then there are select days on which the onboarding process starts. It is common for all external hires irrespective of level or role.

Time is typically divided to accommodate form filling, followed by some orientation programmes after which, individuals are guided to their respective functions.

If the company does limited hiring, then we can observe that onboarding is slightly more haphazard. Day one, again typically consists of filling up forms, followed by a few introductions.

However, orientation to company values, etc. may or may not happen. If it does, it may be a quarterly or periodic event during which all hires for the quarter are invited.

# How Do You Onboard a Senior Leader?

Throughout this entire exercise we possibly do not relate or empathise with the new hire's mindset, but there is an opportunity to continually engage with the hire once the offer is accepted.

When a person decides to leave an organisation, the individual is disengaged from work. Depending on the role for which the individual is hired, there is likely to be some apprehension and performance anxiety.

While the person may have done some basic research using informal networks or Glassdoor reviews, there will still be many unanswered questions in the person's mind about culture and ways of working in the new company.

There may be excitement as well since individuals usually join new organisations as their first job or at a role higher than their previous job. It is with this mindset that the individual joins the organisation. And how do we welcome them? With a multitude of forms that need to be filled!

Capitalising on this mindset, allaying some of the anxieties while confirming some of the excitement in the pre-joining period itself can make the onboarding energetic and exciting for the individual.

#### Roles, time frames and onboarding

If the roles of a brand manager and a training executive in a fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company are different, should they have the same onboarding programme?

The above question brings out a rather stark comparison. But, we do observe that many companies follow a standard approach towards onboarding, and this may differ for senior leaders. It is important to note that different people join the organisation at different levels and in different roles.

Hence, a role-based approach towards onboarding is important. Some part of the onboarding can be common. However, with excellent technology support today, a role-based programme that sets up the role holder for success is a definite possibility.

Similarly, the time frame within which a role holder is expected to contribute can also determine the duration and intensity of the onboarding programme.

For instance, in an IT services company there is an extended training period followed by deployment for fresh graduates. Onboarding programmes for such hires need to be different from those of say, individuals joining in finance or delivery leads.

#### Range of onboarding programmes

Across multiple companies we see onboarding at different levels. We have also heard stories of new hires who did not get basic infrastructure for a few weeks or months and were left to figure things out on their own. If we plot onboarding programmes on a spectrum, it would range from 'Basic – Form Filling' to 'Elaborate Socialisation Programmes'.

Almost all companies, without fail, do the first level of onboarding (which involves form filling). This is more due to statutory and regulatory requirements. For instance, in India, transferring Provident Fund from the previous organisation, linking your bank account for salary credit, etc. are commonly completed on the first day.

Similarly, companies do tend to have a slightly modified plan for onboarding senior leaders. Companies do a good job at the basic requirements to make the individual feel welcomed as s/he starts work, i.e., getting the required documentation done, providing work-related infrastructure, and so on.

However, what are left wanting are the finer aspects of understanding and assimilating the culture, networking, enabling team, etc. An Egon Zender survey reported that one of the biggest stumbling blocks for new leaders was poor grasp of how the organisation works, i.e., cultural norms, practices and way of working. It appears that the current onboarding programmes are not having the desired impact.

#### Setting up a new leader for success

To create powerful onboarding programmes for new leaders, we must understand the context in which they operate. For that, we need to examine the work of leaders. Whenever a company hires an external leader it is for one – or both – of the reasons below:

- Augment existing leadership capability
- Lead a strategic initiative for which internal talent is not readily available

After joining, the company will want the leader to assume responsibility as soon as possible.

To make this transition successful, the company should understand what drives success for the new leader. Some aspects to be considered:

- Success of any leader is based on the team's performance, hence breaking the ice with the team is probably one of the most important aspects to be considered.
- A leader seldom operates in isolation. To drive things to the right place, there is a strong need to build cohesion between groups having competing goals. Hence the need to understand peer networks and stakeholder expectations.
- To effectively discharge points 1 and 2 there is a need to understand the ways of working, organisational nuances, informal networks, key influencers, power centres and such finer aspects which cannot be documented. We can club all this under an overarching umbrella of cultural understanding.

Experience tells us that it is likely for a new leader to take up to nine months before he/she can demonstrate impact. A socialisation process that does not cater to the above requirements is likely to be rendered as ineffective.





In view of all these, how can we deliver a great onboarding experience to the new leader and achieve desired organisational outcomes? Here are a few ideas that can help.

## 1 Go digital

Thanks to digital tools, there is ample opportunity to engage with the leader well in advance. Companies are using tools to help leaders complete formalities like document submissions before joining.

Pre-joining is a period when all these things can be managed. There is no point in recruiting a senior leader only to have the individual spend an enormous amount of time on the first day sifting through paperwork!

However, digital tools need not be limited to only paperwork. They can be used to actively engage with the individual – video calls with the immediate manager and other senior leaders, an introduction to the company and its values, etc. are some of the things that can be managed using technology before joining.

Post-joining, these tools can help track engagement, create and track onboarding plans, push critical messages and many other things. The possibilities are endless; companies need to use these tools based on their specific requirements.

## 2 First day orientation

Needless to say, no digital tool can replace human interaction, and the first day orientation provides that space to create the 'wow' effect for the candidate. A carefully crafted discussion on company culture, history, legacy and values along with key leadership meetings including the manager are key to help the leader feel welcomed.

## 3 Determine the time frame and create a plan

While the first two points are universal, the plan for every leader needs to be one that is a depart-



ture from the standard and a move towards a customised plan.

The plan should be comprehensive, covering all important stakeholder meetings, regular manager catch-ups, peer meetings and team meetings. The frequency, content and number of these meetings can be determined.

However, a rule of thumb can be to cover them in the first two months of joining, in order of priority. For instance, team meetings cannot happen after two months!

Apart from the initial contact, organisations also build in check-ins to monitor progress and highlight any issues. New Manager Assimilation (NMA) is commonly used across multiple organisations after a quarter of the leader joining.

Similarly, seeking feedback from peers and stakeholders, and feeding it back to the leader early during transition can avoid costly failures later. All these aspects need to be built into the plan.

## 4 Coaching and communication plan

While it is important to develop a plan for the new hire, it is equally important that key stakeholders within the organisation are aligned and involved in the onboarding process.

Hiring a new leader for a key position or strategic theme is akin to ushering a change in the organisation. Hence, this needs to be treated with the same rigour as a change management initiative.

Communicating with key stakeholders about the new leader, the leader's portfolio, broad onboarding plan, and expectations from each stakeholder is necessary.

Some senior leaders may need some coaching on how to integrate the new leader into the culture by ensuring participation in key meetings, sharing knowledge of informal networks, etc.

Creating a plan for key stakeholders is likely to reduce the onboarding time and reduce failures.

## Bringing it together

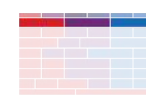
Finally, all plans are only as good as their execution!

The key lies in implementing the plan and making course corrections along the way. In this piece I have tried to list down a few areas that need to be considered while onboarding a senior leader.

Onboarding at this level requires multiple functions and leaders to come together and deliver an astounding experience. It is time we start treating onboarding more as a change management initiative and less of an HR intervention!



*Sandeep Olkar is the head of Competency and Assessment Practice at Wipro Limited. He is passionate about mentoring and leading young talent. A voracious reader, Sandeep spends most of his free time with books. To engage with him, email [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).*



**DRIVE CHANGE** Ability to take the initiative and overcome obstacles in order to drive myself and my team successfully through a change initiative. **CONNECT THE DOTS** Being able to identify and link ideas and concepts in the context of the big picture, beyond a superficial level. These are part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to [bit.ly/SOBLPt1](https://bit.ly/SOBLPt1) to find out more.

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# What Truly **DRIVEs** People

By **SARA YEE**

editor@leaderonomics.com

I have always been interested in the workings of the mind and the interesting changes that can be applied from research into the working world.

When I came across Daniel H. Pink's *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, I was intrigued by the concept that motivation is not what we perceive it to be.

The 'carrot and stick' method (i.e. the best way to motivate ourselves and others is with external rewards such as money) does not work anymore (though in a specific set of situations) and the motivations of your workforce are just different from what one thinks they should be.

Motivation, to me, was something that I needed greatly in my life, because I jumped from project to project after losing interest in the previous ones. The reason, I soon figured out, was what the book's main point was all about and of which I'll discuss shortly.

## From Motivation 2.0 to Motivation 3.0

According to Pink, research in current times show that the change from 'algorithmic' (a set of established rules used to get towards a fixed, predictable goal) to 'heuristic' (creative problem-solving that has no set algorithm) approach means that Motivation 2.0 does not work anymore except in a small subset of situations.

He lists seven reasons why this model of motivation no longer works:

- Loss of intrinsic motivation when presented with rewards to make one work harder
- Loss of high performance because rewards diminish motivation
- Kills creativity by turning people's viewpoints into myopic ones
- Ups unethical behaviour
- Crowds out good, intrinsic behaviour
- Increases addiction towards rewards
- Encourages short-term thinking

## Where the old software does work (somewhat)

All is not lost for Motivation 2.0 though, as Pink touches on circumstances where it does work.

When a particular task is routine and involves a more algorithmic approach, giving rewards can actually help boost productivity because routine tasks often do not have factors that are motivating. Thus, dangling a carrot in such instances work wonders.

As always, this comes with conditions for them to

achieve a higher rate of success:

- Let your workers know why this is necessary
- Acknowledge that the task is inherently boring
- Allow them to do the task however they want, as long as they get to the goal

In regards to this, Pink also acknowledges that 'now that' rewards, given to intrinsically motivated goals, can be good.

However, if you do it too often, people may begin to expect them and feel a sense of entitlement as well.

## Type I vs Type X

Type I (intrinsically motivated) and Type X (extrinsically motivated) are a rough breakdown of people – those who, once the baseline pay has been achieved, work solely on a higher purpose and the other, whom, as Pink puts it, "money is the table".

In the long run, those who lean towards Type I are the ones that would get ahead further in life.

Type I's are generally seen to be healthier, more motivated and are a renewable resource because self-motivation towards a higher purpose does not require an extrinsic motivator.

The three elements of a Type I person:

## 1 Autonomy

Autonomy is something that offers the exact opposite of what micromanagement does – employees are free to do what they want, when they want, as long as they get things done.

That is extremely important in ensuring productivity yet still giving employees the freedom to work on their own terms.

Pink talks about the ever-famous '20% time' made popular by Google but pioneered by 3M's William L. McKnight (he called it 'experimental doodling').

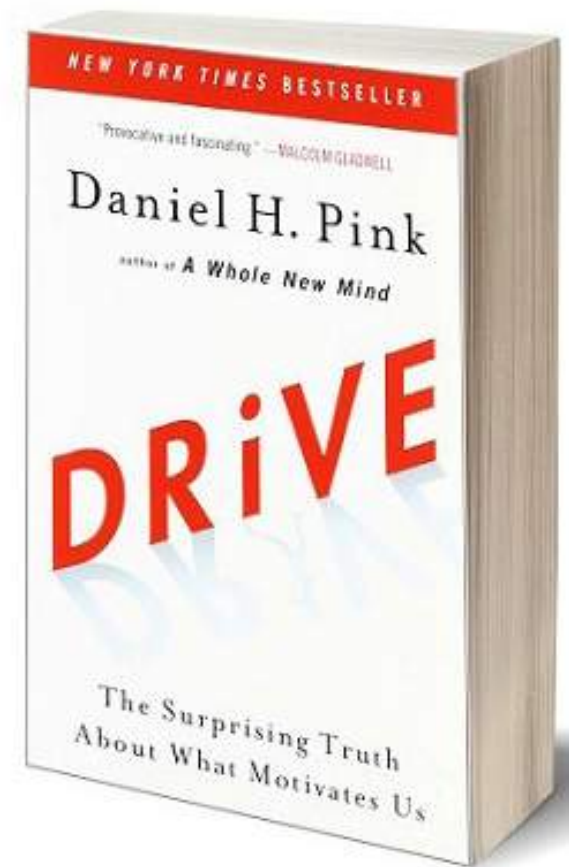
If that does not ring a bell, it's the company responsible for the ubiquitous Post-It note, which, unsurprisingly, came into fruition through autonomous freedom.

Autonomy, at the heart of it, believes that people doing things in their own time means that they want to be accountable for it because of the freedom that they possess.

## 2 Mastery

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, founder and co-director of the Quality of Life Research Centre, discovered the meaning of 'flow'. It is a state in which people are completely lost in an activity, when they are in a pure state of concentration and passion.

Mastery, in a sense, is attained when one reaches the state of flow. One is completely absorbed into work so much so that one heads forth towards mastery because of it.



As Pink says, in the working environment, flow can be brought about by 'Goldilocks tasks' i.e. tasks that are neither too hard nor too easy.

The other one is applying the Sawyer Effect, something that turns work into play, by allowing even those stuck in the most mundane of tasks to find mastery by going beyond their job scope in their own time.

Pink notes the three laws of mastery as:

- Mastery is a mindset
- Mastery is a pain
- Mastery is an asymptote

## 3 Purpose

Purpose is the final of the triumvirate and having that higher purpose can help to spur autonomous and mastery-seeking people to greater heights.

By seeking a higher sense of purpose, one would be more inclined towards going forward in an environment that is conducive for work. Motivation 3.0 people say 'we', and 2.0s say 'they'. See the difference?

Not only that, Pink suggests that companies should allocate some budget towards causes pertinent to their employees to improve their well-being.

Think of it this way, it is not how much they spend but rather *how* they spend.

My father came up with this wonderful example: If you were to lose RM50 versus give away RM50 to a charity, essentially they have the same outcome – you are RM50 poorer, but which situation will you feel better about?

## Concluding thoughts

Motivation is not all it seems, and the old way of motivation has mainly slid into ineffectiveness because the current workforce is motivated by higher factors.

Despite this, there are still people who are more Type X the ones who are driven by extrinsic motivators. According to a peer-reviewed article by Christopher Niemiec, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, studies have shown higher rates of health issues with people who practise these.

Even if you cannot change right away, taking small steps will help you go towards your purpose and into better mastery and autonomy of the art of motivation.

■ This article was previously published in print.



Sara's mind was 'blown' when she read this book and it has changed the way she sees how motivation works, though she still needs a shot of tea (no, not coffee) every morning in order to fully wake up – everything else is good. You can reach her at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).





# The Leaderonomics Show



**DIGITAL  
INNOVATION  
ALLOWS US TO  
BE CREATIVE.**  
- Tim Hendricks



This video is available at [bit.ly/lowcodeTH](https://bit.ly/lowcodeTH). Check out our other The Leaderonomics Show videos at [bit.ly/TheLDRShow](https://bit.ly/TheLDRShow).

By **SANDY CLARKE**  
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**W**HILE the change-of-pace in business and technology continues to increase, it has traditionally been a near-impossible task to keep up with ever-rising customer demand.

When Steve Jobs first unleashed the iPhone in 2007, consumer power was a sleeping giant waiting to be hand-fed whatever the markets provided. Indeed, part of Apple's ground-breaking success was to provide us with products we never knew we needed.

But now, the giant is wide awake, and consumers are now demanding new products and services at a rate never seen before. While this makes for a great era in competitive business, it begs the question: How can companies improve and innovate to meet growing demands?

This is where people such as Tim Hendricks – managing partner of Orangeleaf Consulting – come in.

Appearing on *The Leaderonomics Show* with host Roshan Thiran, Hendricks discussed the innovative system of Low Code, which some people have heard of, but few have taken advantage of this side of the world.

## Minimal coding needed

As Hendricks explained, Low Code is a user-friendly platform that enables people without the technological know-how to develop digital programmes, products and services, without the burden of having to write code.

For people with coding experience, it removes tedious and repetitive tasks found in coding, so that apps and other developments can be created up to 10 times faster than before.

So, how does Hendricks work with companies to put this innovative platform to use? As he put it, "Typically, I look at a company and their processes. Every company has their own processes. You can have standardised software, but there's always a few things that are specific to the particular company.

"So, I look at what could be digitised, what could be improved, and then I talk to the company and point out the areas they would benefit from by digitising and innovating.

"This could be cutting down process costs, but it could also be offering a completely new type of service to customers based on digital technology. If they like the ideas, then we look at how to execute."

# Coding Made Easy

## Tim Hendricks on the advantages of Low Code

That all sounds ideal, but what about getting people on board who are fearful of using a tech platform that's unfamiliar to them? How do business leaders get their buy-in?

Hendricks said, "The biggest part of it is involvement. So, we make the business users part of the project team and that has a huge impact on their behaviour where they feel like whatever the result of the project, it's partially their responsibility and because of their contribution.

"So, there's this feeling of ownership. The biggest challenge is to convince companies to dedicate 10 of their business people to work on an IT project.

"These people have a full-time job, and they need to be full-time or semi full-time on a project all of a sudden. But there's much less resistance on adoption of new technology and new systems that are being built, because the people involved are the people who created it."

## The challenge

While Low Code might sound like the answers to business leaders' prayers in a time when competition and disruption are at an all-time high, as with any new tech convenience that arrives on the scene, fears of job security are bound to surface.

Ever since Henry Ford created the first automobile assembly line in the early 20th century, employees have been worried about machines taking over their jobs. With automation set to increase over the coming years, how can people be led to embrace new technology without feeling that their livelihoods will be affected in the process?

Hendricks said, "We have been through this before. Part of that fear is the fear of change, which is partially justified but depends more on mindset than anything else.

"What I always tell people to do is look back to the industrial revolution – there used to be a time when everything was made by hand. Then there were these huge machines and people lost their jobs following a huge shake-up.



"There was a feeling that no one was going to have a job any more – all these products were now produced by machines. So, what happened is a whole new type of service industry erupted from that, and most people now have office jobs that focus on providing a type of service instead of creating products."

For Hendricks, we need to start looking beyond the traditional focus of building skills and knowledge, and instead find ways that we can work with new innovations that, traditionally, have made our lives better and created countless opportunities for both our personal and professional lives.

He advised, "The biggest point to keep in mind is adaptability. We have to assume that our jobs, in five or ten years time, will not be the same as they are today.

"The most important skill is not knowledge of a specific area or field. The most important skill is adapting to the changes that will come."



# The Leaderonomics Show



This video is available at [bit.ly/TLSkimberlynlu](https://bit.ly/TLSkimberlynlu). For more The Leaderonomics Show videos, head to [bit.ly/TheLDRShow](https://bit.ly/TheLDRShow).

## Attracting Star Performers

### How to reduce the brain drain in Malaysia

By **SANDY CLARKE**  
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*As young Malaysian professionals set their sights on careers overseas, a key challenge for the nation is: how do business leaders and organisations attract their talents to come back home?*

IT'S a serious question that requires deep consideration.

As parents dream of sending their children to foreign universities, one possible effect is that fresh graduates will want to remain in their new homes.

For one thing, salaries are much higher in places where the cost of living is lower than in Malaysia.

In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, an entry-level lecturer can earn twice as much the equivalent of a lecturer in Malaysia with five-to-ten years' experience.

What's more, foreign salaries tend to stretch further. Even when living within cities such as London, salaries are aligned to the costs of living.

Outside the cities, star performers can make a very comfortable living, while enjoying freedom that they don't find here in Malaysia.

For the country manager of recruitment firm, Robert Walters, Kimberlyn Lu constantly wrestles with the challenge of how to attract Malaysian talents back home.

In her appearance on *The Leaderonomics Show* with host Sarah Lim, Lu first addressed the changes she's seen in recruitment over the years.

She said, "Ten years ago, you would find that it's the top MNCs that would engage a recruitment firm with a view that it's a cost.

"Now, we find more and more mid-sized companies, SMEs and local companies really having an appreciation for what recruitment can bring. So, our client base is now more diverse.

"Secondly, we find that traditionally, a lot of candidates ten years ago would look for jobs with your typical MNC.

"Now, that appetite has changed, and candidates are more than willing to join start-ups, emerging companies and local organisations. So, there's always a fight for good talent.

"The exposure that you get working in a small or

growing company, versus a large organisation, means that you learn different things."

#### Bringing the talent home

Lu talked about the challenges faced by Asian companies in their quest to hire international talent (i.e. Malaysians who currently work abroad) and revealed that the team at Robert Walters play a considerable role to help Asian companies overcome those challenges.

When asked why Malaysians working abroad should consider returning home, Lu pointed to the potential of career growth and progression as just two of the reasons why they might want to come back.

She said, "A lot of Asian companies are at the point where they're still potentially small or mid-sized, and looking to grow.

"Hence, if you were a talent who joins the right place at the right time, you'd be working for a company that's looking to grow aggressively.

"So, potentially, you're able to get involved, end-to-end, in projects, which you might not get in big companies because your role would be smaller and defined.

"In an Asian company, you can start in research and development (R&D), to product development, all the way to launch, and you get that full gamut of exposure.

"It can also help to propel your career, working for a company that's looking to grow. Because the company's looking to scale up, your career grows exponentially."

Given that the potential for a meaningful career exists here in Malaysia, what is it that keeps young Malaysians flocking overseas to begin their work lives?

For Lu, a likely attraction lies in how companies abroad engage their workforce.

"International companies tend to be recognised more for better workplace culture, and have better emphasis on work-life balance and all these things that are progressively more important," she said.

"That's why we play a strong advisory role to our Asian company clients, letting them know that beyond career progression, these things are equally important.

"And we're finding that more and more Asian companies are adapting to this; they're more open to creating a positive workplace, because these are non-monetary, but are equally important to people."

#### Early work experiences

For Lu – a recruitment veteran of over 10 years – one of the most important joys of work life is the ability to meet many people and gain insights from their experiences.

She said, "Fortunately, my job allows me to meet a lot of people and I find the reason I love my job is because I can learn from everyone.

"It need not be someone senior; I could be learning from an intern I'm interviewing, or a managing director (MD) who has had 25 years of career experience. This is what keeps me very inspired."

When asked how she thought young people in Malaysia today could benefit from early work experiences, Lu advised that it's more important to seek out ways in which they can add value, rather than simply looking to receive it.

Certainly, one criticism of young people throughout the generations is that some fresh graduates can feel entitled, whether it comes to their salary, progress, guidance, and other aspects of their new jobs.

As Lu puts it, young people need to be more active in their own learning and to realise that it's not a one-way transactional relationship, where they can constantly be in receive mode.

She said, "What are they doing extra to seek out new learning, and what are they doing on their own time to scale up their learning?

"It's not just about receiving (lessons), but about proactively doing something and also giving back."

From that point, young professionals are bound to benefit greatly as they work to make a valuable contribution to their team and organisation, which will ultimately lead to a greater return on investment for them in the long run.



*Sandy is a former managing editor at Leaderonomics, and previously enjoyed 10 years as a journalist and broadcaster in the UK. He has been fortunate to gain valuable insights into what makes us tick, which has deepened his interests in leadership, emotions, mindfulness, and human behaviour. Get in touch with him by emailing [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).*





# Turning Conversations into Successful Business Networking

By **DEBRA FINE**  
 editor@leaderonomics.com

**D**O you avoid talking to people in business settings? Do you dread receptions, banquets, and other business-related social events? Do you struggle to make meaningful, long-term connections with your front line managers or franchisors?

You're not alone. Many of us are apprehensive about these situations, because most of us either hate entering rooms where we don't know anyone or hate spending time with people we don't know well.

With a little practice and use of these helpful tips, you'll be conversing at the water cooler effortlessly.

## 1 Introduce and initiate

Go ahead and initiate with a hello! Even if you recognise, or slightly know someone, re-introduce yourself. Be aware of how he introduces himself (you may know him as Charles, but maybe he goes by Chuck) and use his name throughout your interaction. This will help you remember it in the long run and also establish a personal connection.

By taking ownership and initiating a conversation, you will feel more in control to drive the direction of the exchange.

## 2 Use an icebreaker

An icebreaker not only provides a way to meet new people, but also helps jumpstart conversations. For example, using an icebreaker such as "Tell me about the type of work your firm is involved in" instead of simply saying hello can lead to a fruitful conversation, rather than an uncomfortable silence.

Some other valuable icebreakers you might use are:

- "Bring me up to date on your latest project."
- "What do you find to be the most enjoyable aspect of your job?"
- "Tell me about your history with \_\_\_\_\_."
- "How did you come to find yourself in the healthcare field?"

## 3 Express interest and make an effort

You have to be *interested* if you want to be *interesting*. Part of your job as a 'conversee' is to get the other person to talk. Listen to what your conversational partner is saying and ask relevant follow-up questions. Take cues from them and make a mental list of questions you can ask to get them to elaborate.

If you're talking to Mary from the marketing department, ask what she's working on and what the new marketing strategies are. This is a great way to brainstorm about future projects, find out about potential clients or build a lasting business relationship.

That being said, be sure not to ask so many questions that you come off as an interrogator. There should be a flow and balance when communicating.

## 4 Find common ground

Whether you're chatting with a new co-worker or a business function speaker, it's important to stay on a related topic. As long as you stay on a subject you are both familiar with – like your specific field or the day's event – you'll be able to communicate easily.

Why are you in the setting you're in? Did you find today's seminar helpful? Wasn't the memo this week interesting? Avoid controversial topics such as politics, religion, personal relationships and family issues, and stick to what you both know is applicable.

## 5 Overcome awkward pauses

It's up to you to keep the conversation going if there are some uncomfortable pauses. Use your setting for ideas to reinvigorate the discussion. Say, "It's great having our sales conference in a warm, tropical place. Have you been to Singapore before?"

Use pauses as an opportunity to compliment your international counterpart. Try, "I'm impressed with what

you're doing for our business. You've made some huge improvements in our technology department over there." This is also a great time to interject with any material you've previously prepared.

## 6 Establish personal boundaries

It's fine if you want to let someone know where you went to college or how many children you have, but be mindful of how much personal information you provide. Sure, your relationship could benefit if you find out both your wives are attorneys, but evaluate the value of the subject matter and its impact on the rapport.

If the dialogue gets too side-tracked into personal details, the business-networking angle can become lost. Revealing too many personal details in a business setting can be inappropriate. Use your best judgment to maximise the content of the conversation.

## 7 Exit thoughtfully

In many business situations, it's important to make contact with several people and move around a room. And, sometimes there is just a good time to move on.

Find an appropriate point in the conversation to make an exit. Say, "I really enjoyed talking to you about today's meeting. I have your card and I'll be in touch with you this week so we can discuss it further."

Make a plan that is actionable and give a specific time when you'll follow up. Most importantly, if you say you're going to do something, do it!



Debra Fine is a USA-based keynote speaker, trainer and bestselling author of *The Fine Art of Small Talk: How to Start a Conversation, Keep It Going, Build Networking Skills – and Leave a Positive Impression* (Hachette). What are some of your tips for business networking? Share them with us at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).





# Moulding Your Children Into Leaders

By **DR TRAVIS BRADBERRY**  
editor@leaderonomics.com

**W**E all want our children to become leaders. Whether they spend the bulk of their days in the mailroom or at the corner of the office, we want our children to grow to be courageous, passionate and authentic. We want their actions to inspire other people to be their best, to get more out of life than they ever thought possible.

As parents and caretakers of children, their path to leadership is in our hands.

We can model and teach the skills that will equip them to lead themselves and others in this hypercompetitive world, or we can allow them to fall victim to the kind of thinking that makes them slaves to the status quo.

It's a big responsibility – but when isn't being a parent a massive responsibility?

The beauty of building children into leaders is that it's the little things we do every day that mould them into the people they'll become.

Focus on the eight actions below, and you'll build leadership in your children and yourself.

## 1 Model emotional intelligence (EQ)

Emotional intelligence is that 'something' in each of us that is a bit intangible; it affects how we manage behaviour, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results.

Children learn emotional intelligence from their parents, plain and simple. As your children watch you every day, they absorb your behaviour like a sponge. Children are particularly attuned to your awareness of emotions, the behaviour you demonstrate in response to strong emotions, and how you react and respond to their emotions.

## 2 Don't obsess about achievement

Parents get sucked into obsessing about achievement because they believe that this will turn their children into high achievers. Instead, fixating on achievement creates all sorts of problems for kids. This is especially true when it comes to leadership, where focusing on individual achievement gives kids the wrong idea about how work gets done.

Simply put, the best leaders surround themselves with great people because they know they can't do it alone. Achievement-obsessed children are so focused on awards and outcomes that they never fully understand this.

All they can see is the player who's handed the MVP (Most Valuable Player) trophy and the celebrity chief executive officer who makes the news – they assume it's all about the individual. It's a rude awakening once they discover how real-life works.

## 3 Don't praise too much

Children need praise to build a healthy sense of self-esteem. Unfortunately, piling on the praise doesn't give them extra self-esteem.

Children need to believe in themselves and develop the self-confidence required to become successful leaders, but if you gush every time they put pen to paper or kick a ball (the 'everyone gets a trophy' mentality), this creates confusion and false confidence.

Always show your children how proud you are of their passion and effort; just don't paint them as superstars when you know it isn't true.

## 4 Allow them to experience risk and failure

Success in business and in life is driven by risk. When parents go overboard protecting their children, they don't allow them to take risks and reap the consequences. When you aren't allowed to fail, you don't understand risk.

A leader can't take appropriate risks until he or she knows the bitter taste of failure that comes with risking it all and coming up short.

The road to success is paved with failure. When you try to shield your children from failure in order to boost their self-esteem, they have trouble tolerating the failure required to succeed as a leader. Don't rub their face in it either.

Children need your support when they fail. They need to know you care. They need to know that you know how much failure stings. Your support allows them to embrace the intensity of the experience and to know that they'll make it through it all right. That, right there, is solid character building for future leaders.

## 5 Say 'no'

Overindulging children is a sure-fire way to limit their development as leaders. To succeed as a leader, one must be able to delay gratification and work hard for things that are really important. Children need to develop this patience.

They need to set goals and experience the joy that comes with working diligently towards them. Saying 'no' to your children will disappoint them momentarily, but they'll get over that. They'll never get over being spoilt.

## 6 Let children solve their own problems

There's a certain self-sufficiency that comes with being a leader. When you're the one making the calls, you should also be the one who needs to stay behind and clean up the mess they create.

When parents constantly solve their children's problems for them, children never develop the critical ability to stand on their own two feet.

Children who always have someone swooping in to rescue them and clean up their mess spend their whole lives waiting for this to happen. Leaders take

action. They take charge. They're responsible and accountable. Make certain your children are as well.

## 7 Walk your talk

Authentic leaders are transparent and forthcoming. They aren't perfect, but they earn people's respect by walking their talk. Your children can develop this quality naturally, but only if it's something they see you demonstrate.

To be authentic, you must be honest in all things – not just in what you say and do but also in who you are. When you walk your talk, your words and actions will align with who you claim to be. Your children will see this and aspire to do the same.

## 8 Show that you're human

No matter how indignant and defiant your children are at any moment, you're still their hero and their model for the future.

This can make you want to hide your past mistakes for fear that they'll be enticed to repeat them. The opposite is true. When you don't show any vulnerability, your children develop intense guilt about every failure because they believe that they're the only ones to make such terrible mistakes.

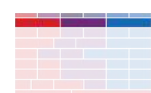
To develop as leaders, children need to know that the people they look up to aren't infallible. Leaders must be able to process their mistakes, learn from them and move forward to be better people.

Children can't do this when they're overcome by guilt. They need someone – a real, vulnerable person – to teach them how to process mistakes and learn from them. When you show them how you've done this in the past, you're doing just that. We can mould our children into leaders, but only if we work at it. Few things in life are as worth your time and effort as this.

■ This article was previously published in print.



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**INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPMENT** IQ, EQ and CQ facilitate a person's abilities in leadership as these are fundamental areas of understanding that form a base for the development of other abilities. This is part of Leaderonomics' **Science of Building Leaders**, a framework which indicates important elements that need to be developed at each stage of one's life, in order to empower the individual to become an effective leader. Head to [bit.ly/SOBLPt1](http://bit.ly/SOBLPt1) to find out more.



By ARIELLE YEN

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**W**HEN I was less than a year old, my mum entered me in a 'Cutest Baby' contest. I didn't quite win – but I was one of the runners-up.

Ever since then, or maybe even before, my parents have harboured high hopes for me as many parents do for their children in today's increasingly competitive atmosphere. (Being cute was one of the 'talents' they thought I might have had as an infant!)

That contest was the beginning of my mum's quest to guide me into the all-rounded person she hoped I would be. From thereon came a slew of piano lessons, baby ballet, mental arithmetic, art classes, English lessons, Mandarin tuition, and speech and drama sessions.

What happens when we start learning or being challenged at a young age? Does the outcome matter?

### Baby Einsteins

Starting to learn at a young age has advantages. Studies by Harvard show that in order to speak a second or third language fluently, or at least proficiently, it's best to start at age three. Younger learners are more able to learn proper pronunciation and adapt to processing words and grammar.

Additionally, learning new languages or being multilingual increases critical thinking, creativity and flexibility of the mind.

Starting young also gives you a longer time to master your craft and figure out what talents you might have, what activities you enjoy, or what skills you might want to cultivate to an occupational level.

From my childhood till now, I've tried my hand at multiple endeavours. Some at my parents' insistence, others at my own.

At one point in my life I thought I'd be a pro equestrian – I lasted three months at horse-riding lessons. At other times I tried to be an expert skier (I was the worst out of everyone in our beginner ski group), a pianist, a potter and a ballerina. It's safe to say that I didn't become particularly skilled in any of those pursuits!

On the other hand, being taught to read and encouraged to love books at an early age has made me an avid reader – I can devour heavy novels in a matter of days.

I also enjoy writing and drawing, which means that all those trips to the children's library and art classes didn't go to waste!

Sometimes, you can pick things up when you're younger, go back to it at a later age and find that you remember quite a bit from what you had learnt previously – the human mind and the information it retains is amazing.

The art of learning is a skill everyone should pick up.

*It is better to know how to learn than to know.*  
– Dr Seuss

### Jack of all trades, master of one

Unless you are some kind of prodigy, you're not going to be talented at everything you learn, at least not without tiring yourself out through non-stop practice.

It is definitely advisable to explore your options, and not be afraid of stepping out of your comfort zone. However, it's equally beneficial to pick out one or two interests to direct your focus towards, and become really skilled in that area.

The now-retired professional skateboarder Tony Hawk describes himself as a 'hyperactive child'. His mother described him as "so hard on himself and expected himself to do so many things".

Instead of trying to juggle many different activities, Hawk was advised in his younger years to channel his energy and time into skateboarding. By age 14, he was a professional skateboarder, and today he's one of the best-known skateboarders in the world.

As an indecisive person, I was often overwhelmed by the many choices of classes I was given.

I do not consider doing all those activities a waste of time, but I do wish I had focused more on certain classes, rather than trying to be good at every pursuit without putting enough effort into mastering any one thing.

### Childlike wonder

Starting young may give you the opportunity to develop abilities and adapt to new learning experienc-

# Lessons for a Lifetime

## Does getting a head start guarantee success?



es more fluidly than starting at an older age.

The lack of fear and the openness to new experiences are qualities you're more likely to have as a child, but are also qualities that encourage improvement, development and innovation – the type of growth we see so often in the tech and business worlds.

I once went rock-climbing. I found myself breathless, trembling at the height I had hauled myself up to. I was on the 'easiest level' wall aimed at young children; the climbing wall holds were shaped like smiley faces and Tetris blocks. There was a little boy, about five years old, rambunctiously scrambling up the wall next to mine.

"It's really high up there. Don't you think it's scary?" I asked him apprehensively as he leapt off the top of a very tall structure.

"It's not scary!" he yelled back at me, already starting to climb again. His family watched him proudly, laughed at our exchange and my apparent cowardice.

The gallant attitude of young children is something I wish I had retained in adulthood.

*Play is the highest form of research.*  
– Albert Einstein

### Where are we now? Where will we be?

Thinking back to the baby who beat me in the cutest baby competition (no hard feelings!), I wonder where he or she is, and what the future holds for the person.

He or she could be a student about to complete a degree, completely uninterested in appearance-based

competitions. One of the babies who never made it in the Top 10 could be in the running for the next Miss Malaysia.

The cutest baby competition wasn't taken seriously by anyone. It wasn't meant to set any expectations for anyone's parents or children. My mum thought I was a cute baby, but I don't think she wanted me to grow up making a career out of my cuteness. I doubt that's what any of the other contestants' parents wanted either.

I would never expect my own child to be a Miss Universe, a savant, or an Olympic medallist. I would, however, expect my child to have interests, to want to cultivate those interests, and to enjoy learning.

I think that my mum's insistence in placing me in so many classes as a child, whilst not turning me into a multiple-talented intellectual, has made me more open-minded and, to an extent, 'adventurous'.

I would like to believe that the bruises on my knees then from rock-climbing alluded to these!

■ This article was previously published in print.



Arielle will not be winning any 'Cutest Adult' contests anytime soon. She still likes trying out new things. She discovered that trampolining is more difficult than you'd think, but she's decided that she enjoys Zumba. Have you tried or learnt anything in your past or near-present? Do you have something you're particularly good at? Share your thoughts with us at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).



# Raising the Next Generation of Leaders

By **JOSHUA MILLER**  
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**A**S a father of two young children, I know parenting doesn't come with instructions – you learn-as-you-go, navigating a course that hopefully provides a positive outcome.

I never considered my training in executive coaching, psychology, and organisational development to help me as a Dad, so, I too plodded along as a parent, doing my best, hoping for the best.

I was so wrong! I soon realised that the fundamentals I used to develop executive leaders could be used to develop future leaders, and the process can start with us as parents, raising our children to be leaders.

Here are five qualities of leadership that I believe make it a vital life skill:

- **A positive attitude:** The ability to believe in your own goals and abilities in the face of discouragement from others.
- **Overcoming adversity:** Reframing problems into 'challenges' to stay focused and get over, around, or through all sorts of barriers.
- **Perseverance:** Sticking to a goal – a training program, work assignment, friendship – is difficult, while quitting is easy. Leaders know when to persevere and when to quit.
- **Commitment:** Learning from mistakes rather than being discouraged by them.
- **Excellence:** Doing the best you can in every situation.

It's never too early to start developing our next generation of leaders. Here are some pointers on teaching the fundamentals of leadership as a parent.

## 1 Setbacks

The true test of a leader's ability lies heavily on how they navigate the unknown and deal with uncertainty. This is a daily risk for all leaders.

Children are no different. They pretty much assume they can get what they ask for – albeit from incessant whining, complaining, or earning it – but what about when it doesn't go as planned?

It's perfectly okay for a child to experience uncertainty or disappointment when it comes to something they want. Saying 'no' to your child is part of being a parent; learning how to handle the letdown is theirs.

## 2 Decision making

Leaders are asked to make all sorts of decisions every day, sometimes with little information to go on. It's a critical skill and a necessity to becoming successful in a leadership role.

Giving your young ones the ability (and opportunity) to choose certain things, like their clothes for school or vegetable with dinner, begins this process.

## 3 Problem solving

As a parent, although it can be heart wrenching at times to hear your child cry or see them upset, allowing them the space to be with their emotions and then finding a way to work through them is truly an essential life skill.



## 4 Entrepreneur mindset

Whenever my oldest has an idea and I can see his creativity booming, my wife and I give him our full attention and encourage him to think through his idea.

Last week, he wanted to create a lemonade stand to raise money to buy something he wanted. Being creative and innovative is part of every leader in one way or another.

## 5 Being accountable

Being accountable is something we all struggle with from time to time, but teaching kids the concept of 'showing up' is one of the most important life lessons.

When my oldest decided he no longer wanted to continue on a sports team he was on, we asked him to think about his teammates and what they may feel, should he quit.

The good news is that he didn't quit and his team went on to win the championships.



*Joshua Miller is an Amazon best-selling author of the book I CALL BULLSHIT: Live Your Life, Not Someone Else's, executive coach and TEDx speaker. He is a leadership development expert with more than 15 years of experience in the creation, training, and facilitation of learning platforms while working and influencing cross-functional teams in ever-changing fast paced environments. Connect with him at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).*

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By **CHRISTINE MARYANNA GABRIEL**  
editor@leaderonomics.com

**N**OBODY wants to open the door when stress is knocking on the other side. We feel defeated when it creatively finds its way into our family and tries to become an additional member.

A research in 2009 by educational consultants, Deborah J. Thomason and Pamela A. Havice, highlighted that past discussions on stress have focused on a single person.

When considering family stress, the focus needs to be on how stress impacts the family as a whole. They defined family stress as an imbalance between the demands of the family and the ability to cope with those demands.

These demands are also known as stressors – a life event or transition that happens in the family. Stress is the feeling. How a family copes with stressors impacts the level of stress in the family. Ineffective ways of coping can bring about a myriad of feelings and worst of all – disconnection.

Here are 10 small yet effective ways your family can use to cope with stressors and bid farewell to stress:

## 1 Establish self-care first

If the word 'self-care' is not in your family dictionary, please add it now. Self-care is the simple act of attending to your own needs.

Taking care of one's self first can impact the family system tremendously as it gives permission to the other to take care of his or her own self. This applies especially for working parents.

## 2 Set healthy boundaries

There are many subsystems within the family system. It is the responsibility of the adults in the family to set boundaries between the couple, parent and sibling subsystems.

Dragging your children into adult issues is not only harmful to your children's emotional well-being but to the family system as a whole.

Physically separating yourself from your children to resolve adult issues or seeking professional help is highly recommended to set healthy boundaries and reduce family stress.

## 3 Have an open family system

There is a flow of ideas in open family systems and feedback is exchanged so that members can learn and grow. In closed family systems, no new ideas are allowed and differences of opinions are shut down.

# 10 Tips to Control Tension in the Family

If there is a member in your family that needs to be right all the time, it is a sign that you are in a closed system.

Stress levels are high in closed family systems. Be open to differences and recognise that multiple ways of thinking can exist at the same time in a given space.

## 4 Develop a family management system

Families come in all shapes and sizes.

Thinking about how you would like your family to function is called family management. Use a calendar. Share tasks. Have clear expectations of roles and responsibilities. Plan your budget.

Intentionally developing a management system can give family members a sense of consistency and security that can help family members feel more in control of the stress levels.

## 5 Know when to say 'yes' and 'no'

Parenting can be very stressful especially if you're a single parent. It is important to recognise when you need help and when you don't in terms of raising your children. It's alright to say 'yes' to help offered, especially when you are overwhelmed.

It's a way of allowing others to love you by helping you. Learn to say 'no' when you have friends or relatives who interfere too much in your parenting methods. It's a way of being in control as a parent.

## 6 Validate efforts

When was the last time you validated an effort, not just an accomplishment, but an effort made by a family member?

Too often, we focus on the negative results and are quick to blame the other person instead of encouraging each other. Sometimes just saying, "I know you're trying really hard to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blanks)" is all your mum/dad/sister/brother needs to hear. No 'but' after the sentence.

## 7 Have non-judgemental family meetings

Calling for family meetings is an intentional way of saying, "We are here for each other." However, family meetings can turn ugly when a lot of

judgements are thrown at each other.

Create a space for each voice in the room to feel heard. Be clear of the meeting agenda. Recognise that differences are not threats, but rather, opportunities for the family to grow.

## 8 Acknowledge 'it'

'It' is often unspoken in many families. 'It' could be the loss of a family member 10 years ago and the grief that continues to linger.

'It' could be an affair that is rather kept as a secret.

'It' could be a past trauma.

Unspoken 'its' may feel safe and comfortable now but the silence could insidiously affect each member in various harmful forms – substance abuse, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Acknowledge the 'it' for the long-term health of your family. Seek professional help if needed.

## 9 Accept that nothing is permanent

Pain is temporary. Stress is temporary.

Loneliness is temporary. Conflicts are temporary. Reminding each other in the family that nothing is permanent reduces the rigidity in the system. It gives the family hope to change.

## 10 Be together

When a family is under stress, it is common to withdraw from each other.

This may be okay if a member just needs some space for him or herself but can be problematic when members are starting to feel disconnected. Find ways to do things together. Because remember, stress is temporary.

■ This article was previously published in print.



Christine Maryanna Gabriel is a marriage and family therapist at Rekindle Centre for Systemic Therapy. She is also a United States Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and is very passionate about increasing mental health awareness in Malaysia. What do you think of these tips? Let us know at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).



By **DR LOO LEAP HAN**  
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**R**ECENTLY, I had the privilege to lead a meet-and-greet session with a group of vibrant, carefree and gung-ho Gen Ys. This session was organised to get a snapshot of Gen Y's view on the way human resources (HR) works in their organisation – to be specific, the HR dos and don'ts.

As a HR practitioner myself, it is vital for me to understand how Gen Y thinks and feels in the workplace, what their personal and career expectations are, and most importantly, what they want out of HR.

I started the session by asking the participants what they like and don't like about HR. These were the answers and the elaboration provided:

#### The Likes

1. HR manages payroll on time – we need money to pay bills and fund our lifestyles.
2. HR organises employee engagement programmes and activities – we want parties and fun at work.

#### The Dislikes

1. HR likes to impose unnecessary policies, rules and regulations – we are humans with feelings, and not just an asset.
2. HR is inclined to see issues only at the micro level – we must 'think in and out of the box'.
3. HR is sometimes not transparent – we want trust, not FRUSTRation.
4. HR has only the company and management's interests in mind – we work **with** the company and not **for** the company.
5. HR is not fair – we want equality and not dissimilarity of practices.
6. HR is like a politician – we want HR leadership of the people, by the people, and for the people.
7. HR is very rigid and 'calculative' – we want flexibility.
8. HR must upgrade their people skills – HR = RH; RH means respect humans)

*\* There were many more dislikes, some which I think are out of the HR context, and so are not included in this list.*

During the tea break, I read through my notes. Two likes and eight dislikes. Wow, they really hate HR.

I was taken aback at the feedback shared and how frustrated the participants were towards HR's way of work (they claimed that HR's current knowledge, skills and aptitude are still not up to the 'new world of work' standards).

I could see their dissatisfaction and hear it from the tone of their voice. I guess in their minds, there is nothing that HR can do – HR is a follower, not a leader.

My confidence was at stake. I wondered how much they knew about HR... or how little they knew. I needed to find out more about their HR concerns in the workplace.

In order to get the participants' active involvement for the next session, I decided not to proceed with the presentation of my slides as I believed they would prefer to be on their mobile phones, texting and 'Instagramming'.

I divided the participants into five groups and told them to list what they thought HR should do or change for the better. The outcome of their presentation are as follows:

### 1 HR policies

HR should remove all the unnecessary and annoying policies, such as the 5-minute tea break, no eating during working hours, dress-down Fridays, no music during working hours, replacement hours for time taken off, no using Facebook and YouTube during working hours, and other policies that kill employee morale. Replace them with more value-added HR policies that foster productivity and inclusion.

### 2 Performance appraisal

HR should display the scores for all individuals so that all employees can view them. Employees want transparency and fairness of the appraisal scoring within and outside of their department,

# Gen Y's Thoughts on How HR Can Do Better



ments, so that they can then seek justification from their superior and/or HR if they find that the scores are too high or too low for certain employees.

Gen Y believes that performance reviews can be thought of as a positive interaction between superior-employee, superior-superior, employee-employee, and management-superior-employee, and not a 'closed door' exercise.

### 3 Employment terms

Gen Y concurred that working hours should not be confined to the standard 9-to-5. Employees are to be given the flexibility in deciding their working hours as long they fulfil the 48-hours-per-week requirement. This also applies to lunch breaks. Employees want to eat lunch at any time they want – they are not willing to starve themselves till the designated lunch hour!

### 4 Recruitment and selection

Gen Y feels they should be invited to join selected interview sessions at the departmental level. They want to ensure the new colleague(s) they will be working alongside are aligned with the personality and culture of the team. This will speed up the on-boarding and socialisation process for the new employee.

### 5 Compensation and benefits

Gen Y suggested that increment and bonus rewards should not be solely based on individual performance, but on team performance instead. There should be no more A+, A, B, B-, C or D grading for each employee – they are not labelled products.

Humans do make mistakes, no one is perfect. Besides, the grading of an employee's performance is often manipulated for office political purposes namely, 'appraisal politics'.

### 6 Training and learning

Gen Y is very excited about organising forums and discussion groups around topics. They enjoy having facilitators who make them think and find solutions. They want to contribute and make changes. Now is the time to **unlearn to learn** and **relearn**.

### 7 HR leadership

Gen Y expects HR teams to be more open-minded and empathetic, utilising the Six Thinking Hats approach when dealing with people issues. They should also be excellent lobbyists and dedicated change advocates. Stop saying: "This is company policy, so we must ...", instead, practise saying, "Let me see what I can do about it."

There are more points, but I only picked those that I think are appropriate for HR practitioners' attention (self included). This activity was not about tackling their dissatisfaction nor fulfilling their HR wish list, but to understand how Gen Y thinks and feels their HR teams

could make the workplace better.

This feedback provides a glimpse into how Gen Y views HR, and I can say that they reflect a bad opinion of HR. How sad and devastating. Unfortunately, bad HR teams do exist out there – but there are also many great HR teams doing their very best.

Why do employees love to hate HR and what can HR do about it? My answer is simple: People don't hate HR, they only misunderstand HR.

My personal advice to the HR community, HR believers and HR dreamers: We must be very aware of what's happening in the people business and be able to take these essentials and translate it into what it means for HR, and then create a plan to implement them. HR's role is all about educating, helping and developing others.

Here are some HR approaches we can implement in the new HR ways of work:

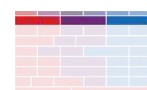
- Practise participative HR decision making
- Perform HR outreach initiatives
- Champion HR storytelling
- Have the 'Yes, it's possible' mindset
- Be flexible
- Build trust
- Be an active listener

Last but not least, here are three successful HR key words to remember on the go: agility, empower and engage.

Before I ended the session, one participant asked me why I am in HR. My reply to him was this: "I'm in HR because I like working with people. The journey for me is to help teach people how to use HR. Please go give your HR team a big hug and appreciate them for what they do. Don't be surprised, they may surprise you back."



Dr Loo has about 18 years of HR industry experience in manufacturing, healthcare and infrastructure construction. Currently, he is the head of human resources and organisation development in a leading infrastructure construction company. He is responsible for the people and culture strategy, and for implementing group strategic human resources initiatives. Dr Loo has also held lecturing engagements at a private institution of higher learning, Lincoln University College. Get in touch with him at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).



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By JESSICA THIEFELS  
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**T**HE average cost to hire a new employee is USD4,000, according to Glassdoor, and this cost varies based on positions and companies.

With such a significant investment of your company's time and capital, once you find the right person, you need to ensure that you properly onboard and retain their talent.

According to recent research by Tinypulse, 91 per cent of first-year workers are retained by companies with an efficient onboarding process, and 69 per cent are more likely to stay in a company for three years if there's a well-structured onboarding programme.

One way to optimise your onboarding is to involve the whole team. Consider how you can make onboarding more collaborative, which will, in turn, engage both the new hire and your current staff.

## 1 Poll current employees

The best source of onboarding insights is your current team, who has already gone through your process before.

Ask them what worked and what didn't and then incorporate that into new processes. For example, ask about cultural and organisational aspects that they remember – i.e. not knowing whether to bring lunch the first few days – and include more detailed and helpful information in a fresh welcome pack.

Remember, even small anecdotes can be significant, such as:

- The office dress code
- Where to park on the first day
- Do most employees bring in lunch or go out?
- Who do you ask to order new office supplies?

This type of polling can be informal, with 1-on-1 conversations about what they liked and didn't like, or you can create a survey with specific questions.

## 2 Develop a mentorship programme

While it's helpful for a human resource (HR) rep or manager to train a new hire on technical details, like work devices and paperwork, a peer-level mentor will offer a sense of relatability to the onboarding process while being there for all the little questions that come in the first few weeks at a new job.

Codementor uses their junior developers for mentoring, ensuring that new hires are being mentored by someone who recently went through onboarding themselves, but still has experience with the company. They explain that there's an additional benefit for the mentors too:

"Having a junior developer take on the responsibility is a great way for them to put their knowledge to practice, give them leadership opportunities, and quietly check that they are up to snuff."

Not to mention, your team new member will likely connect better with someone who has recently been in their shoes. They may also feel more comfortable approaching their peers with questions and issues, rather than a busy manager.

## 3 Integrate technology

Use technology to your advantage during the onboarding process, suggests Elena Carstoiu, chief operations officer (COO) of Hubgets. She explains: "More and more companies rely on instant team collaboration technology to reduce the induction period and speed up integration for newcomers. Personally, I think that the transfer of company knowledge is the biggest gain in building a collaborative work environment with the help of technology."

Like mentoring, using technology such as group chat platforms and shared file storage, such as Google Drive or Box, allows employees to dive right in. With access to documents and co-workers, they can be more effective and onboard with greater efficiency.

Carstoiu continues, "New employees get to learn the ropes of their new job faster than ever because the technology provides them with instant access to work information while helping them bond with the team. For companies, this means a minimised induction effort and a faster, cost-effective onboarding process."

You likely already use many of the tools that would

# 5 Ways to Make Onboarding More Collaborative



make this experience more efficient, so the task now is to introduce them into the onboarding process.

## 4 Build a culture of community

Look outside your new hire's team when it comes to onboarding and involve staff from different departments. This helps the new employee understand the various communication channels and how departments work cross-functionally.

Learning about different roles will also clarify where and how the new hire fits into the organisation as a whole, all of which helps new hires feel more like part of the team, suggests Ron Carucci, founder of Navalent and author of *Rising to Power*.

He explains to *Harvard Business Review*: "Building relationships during their first year can help new hires feel less isolated and more confident." To make this happen, Carucci suggests:

"New hires, in partnership with their manager, should identify 7-10 people – superiors, peers, direct reports, and internal and external customers – whose success they will contribute to, or who will contribute to their success."

This process will help you foster a culture of community within your company while setting your employee up for success.

## 5 Track success and solicit feedback (from everyone)

A recent survey by SilkRoad revealed that only 45 per cent of companies evaluate their onboarding programme. This means more than half of companies are missing out on a valuable opportunity to reflect and improve upon their process.

Once an employee is fully onboarded, you should

ask for their feedback and the feedback from anyone who was involved, including co-workers and managers.

According to that same survey, 53 per cent of C-suite executives are only occasionally or minimally involved in the onboarding process, so be sure to include them in this feedback process.

Don't forget to track and analyse the success of employees based on their onboarding programmes, allowing you to adjust and implement in the future. This helps you optimise onboarding while showing your staff that you value and appreciate their opinions.

## Find your collaborative onboarding process

A team-based onboarding programme creates a faster, more streamlined experience for the entire company and has a variety of benefits.

The new hire gets up to speed faster and has someone to connect with during the first few weeks, allowing them to understand their place within the company and the dynamics of the culture.

Current staff members are also given a voice in guiding new talent and see that their opinions matter. Collaborations like this engages the entire team, while building an onboarding programme that helps you retain talent for years to come.

 Jessica Thiefels is the founder and CEO of Jessica Thiefels Consulting, a content marketing agency. She has been writing for more than 10 years and has been featured in top publications such as Forbes, Entrepreneur and Fast Company. She also regularly contributes to Virgin, Business Insider, Glassdoor, Score.org and more. Connect with her on LinkedIn or get in touch by emailing [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).



By **JEFF HADEN**  
editor@leaderonomics.com

As I learnt when I met Mark Cuban, courtesy is often a matter of doing what you're least expected to do.

# How to Make a Great First Impression



**W**HAT do I remember most about the time I met Mark Cuban at an Inc. GrowCo event? Sure, I remember what we talked about. I remember how nice Mark was to one of volunteers.

However, what made the biggest impression was what he did when he heard I wanted to meet him: He immediately walked across the room to say 'hi'.

Mark didn't 'big-time' me. Mark made me feel big time. Simple? Sure – but I've never forgotten it.

That's because genuinely polite people instantly stand out. They make us feel comfortable. They make us feel respected and valued. They make us feel good about ourselves. And if that's not enough – in case you need a cold, clinical Type A reason to be more courteous – we want to do business with them.

So, if like me you're trying to be politer, and make a better first impression:

## 1 Always be the one who walks

You're at an event. A friend gestures to a person across the room and says, "Let me introduce you to Jim." Jim sees you coming. Jim knows why you're coming. But still: He stands and waits for you to come to him.

Genuinely polite people, no matter how exalted their perceived status, don't wait. They step forward. They smile. They tilt their heads slightly downward (a sign of respect in every culture). They act as if they should be honoured by the introduction, not you.

In short, polite people don't 'big-time' you. Instead, they make you feel like you are the one who is big time.

## 2 Always ask

If you're talking about something just because it feels good to share it, and there's no place for the other person to add value... you're just patting yourself on the back.

When polite people want to talk about themselves, they ask for advice – but not humblebrag advice like, "I notice you keep your car really clean; what wax do you recommend for a Jaguar?"

Ask a question that shows you truly value the other person's expertise or knowledge. The person will feel good, because you implicitly show you trust his or her opinion; you get input you can use. Win-win.

## 3 And always wait to be asked

You know things – cool things, great things. Just make sure you share those things in the right settings.

If you're a mentor, share away. If you're a coach or a leader, share away. If you're the guy who just went on a keto diet, don't tell us all what to order at dinner (unless we ask).

Polite people know that what is right for them might not be right for others – and even if it might be right for others, they know it's not their place to decide. Like

most things in life, offering helpful advice is all about picking the right spot – and polite people know the right spot is always after you are asked.

## 4 Always make the other person the star

You meet someone, talk for 30 minutes, and walk away thinking, "Wow, we just had a great conversation. She's awesome." Of course, when you think about it later, you realise you didn't learn a thing about her.

Polite people are masters at Social Jiu-Jitsu (SJ), the ancient art of getting you to talk about yourself without you ever knowing it happened. SJ masters are fascinated by your every career step, your every journey of personal transformation, your every clever manoeuvre on your climb to the top of your social ladder.

They find you fascinating – and that gives you permission to find yourself fascinating (which is an authorisation we all enjoy).

Social Jiu-Jitsu is easy. As soon as you learn a little about someone, ask how she did it or why she did it. Or what she liked about it, or what she learned from it, or what you should do if you're in a similar situation.

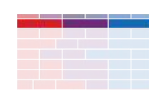
And don't think you're being manipulative, because you're not. Showing a sincere interest in people isn't manipulative. It's fun – for you and for them. They get

to talk about things they're passionate about, and you get to enjoy their enthusiasm and excitement and passion.

If that's not enough, think of it this way: No one receives too much respect. Asking other people about themselves implicitly shows you respect them, which is great, because respect and courtesy go hand in hand.



Jeff Haden is a speaker, ghostwriter, and author of *The Motivation Myth: How Highly Successful People Really Set Themselves Up to Win*. To connect with Jeff, email us at [editor@leaderonomics.com](mailto:editor@leaderonomics.com).



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# 5 Tips to Thrive in Your Career

By **CAROLYNE NJOGU**  
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**W**HEN it comes to the future of work, none of us know with certainty what it will look like or what industries or skills will emerge as winners. However, we know that change is here and it remains ubiquitous.

For today's graduates and employees, the future of work raises a critical question: How does one prepare to build a successful and meaningful career when the employment landscape keeps changing?

No one knows the answer to this question because no one knows what the future will bring. The reality is that the future is always unknown and change is always constant.

To this end, here are a few things to consider as you endeavour to build a thriving career.

## 1 Develop your soft skills

Necessary and relevant skills are what get you hired, while acquiring a unique skill differentiates you from the competition.

As the job market evolves with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) and the rapid changes in technology, having critical thinking skills as well as cultural, emotional and social intelligence in your repertoire of skills can boost your career significantly.

Research shows that empathy is a construct that is fundamental to leadership. If you want to grow and be recognised as a leader, you will need to demonstrate to those in your team that you care.

Knowing how and when to respond in a given situation will set you apart. In essence, as Malcolm Gladwell says in his book, *Outliers*: "... not knowledge for its own sake. It's knowledge that helps you read situations correctly and get what you want."

## 2 Have a purpose

Knowing why you want what you want not only guides – it also helps you navigate the uncertainties of the daily grind, as well as motivates you to take on challenges that you may otherwise shun.

In his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl says, "Don't aim at success. The more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself."

Simply put, a successful career is one that is based on bringing your best-value offering to serve others. Therefore, deciding early on how you want your career to end up – in fact, before it even starts – is key.

## 3 Know thyself

Would you like to feel alive no matter what's going on in your life? If the answer is yes, these aspects need to be aligned: who you are, why



you are (your purpose), what you are (the value you bring); you will also need to have clarity on what values guide you.

Our beliefs dictate our behaviour, and our behaviour influences how we act. For instance, if you believe you can, you are more likely to take actions toward a particular goal and thus act congruent to your beliefs.

While purpose inspires, values direct; and self-knowledge guarantees power – the unique and unassailable power that results in authenticity. And, as Oprah Winfrey encourages us to do: 'own your power'.

Remarkably, we all like and are drawn to people who are grounded in being themselves because they come alive in being who and what they are – authentic!

## 4 Find a mentor and a sponsor

Humans intuitively know that emulating another is the easiest, quickest and best way to learn, and we begin doing so from our childhood days.

When it comes to growing in your career, learning through mentorship is still the best approach. It's your responsibility to seek out and ask for help from those who are more senior than you, especially those who are in the role you aspire to fill one day.

However, some research studies by the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) have found that having more mentorship did not lead to career advancement, but having sponsorship did.

In short, "Mentors advise you and sponsors advocate for you. Sponsorship leads to a career advancement while mentorship is instrumental to learning in general."

In her TED Talk, Morgan Stanley executive and Harvard MBA graduate Carla Harris elaborates on the need for a sponsor if one is to advance their career. She goes on to share how she got a boost in her career to become a top Wall Street banker –

just by having a sponsor.

Unlike mentorship, sponsorship advances those involved. Sponsors open up doors to their protégés, who in return, support and drive a sponsor's vision.

## 5 Be adaptable and agile

For some, the future of work and all its uncertainties presents a daunting challenge, yet for those equipped to manage change, this means opportunities are rife.

Have you read the classic book, *Who Moved My Cheese* by Dr Spencer Johnson?

If you have, you know that change didn't just start now. It has always been with us; in fact, it's what drives value and innovations.

*Harvard Business Review* states that adaptability is the new competitive advantage, therefore, boosting your adaptability quotient (AQ) is crucial, as how well you adapt to change will determine if you thrive or die.

Thus, we should embrace change by cultivating what psychologist Carol Dweck calls a growth mindset, for it's your sure-proof way to building a meaningful and thriving career.

To conclude, no matter what the future of work brings, it is your responsibility to seek out a career that aligns with the core of who, why and what you are (your unique value offering) in skills and talents. For in the end, success, meaning and fulfilment ensues only in such an undertaking of purpose.



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# Infusing a **Work Culture** with Love

By **NAND KISHORE CHAUDHARY**  
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*Work is love made visible. And if you can't work with love, but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of the people who work with joy. – Khalil Gibran*

**L**OVE what you do and do what you love is another way of expressing the above quote by the famous poet.

We all want to find joy and passion in our work, but often this does not happen. It is the attitude of many people that work is drudgery and a burden that has to be done.

No one should have to live life with this sort of negativity. Unfortunately, the attitude of both employers and employees contribute to this mindset to some degree.

When leaders fail to create a culture based on love, then workers will not find their true passion. Instead, they will feel undervalued and overwhelmed.

Employees today are looking for more than a pay-check. They want to be associated with organisations that care and do meaningful work. It used to be that workers would come in, put in their 40 hours, go home, return the next day and repeat the process.

However, the younger generation that is entering the workforce needs more than work. They want meaning and authenticity. The only way to get this is to infuse love into everything you do.

This may sound naïve, but I have made sure that love is the basis for everything that my organisation does. People are often confused by the way I operate my business. They cannot fathom the idea of putting progress over profits. This is a prevailing attitude among many businesses.

Companies that operate in the traditional manner are worried about making money and pleasing shareholders. This is the old, outdated way of thinking. The future of organisations is consciousness and compassion.

Plain old products are no longer good enough for consumers, who want to make sure that they are not having a negative impact on society. This change in attitude has been a long time coming but it is very welcome.

When we use love and consciousness as the basis for all our decisions, it leads to a kind of purity and honesty that is priceless.

Leading with love means respecting everyone and treating others with dignity. It is really very simple.

When someone is treated badly repeatedly, they eventually feel dehumanised and invisible – it is as if they don't exist, simply because someone at a higher level feels it is okay to abuse them.

But think about the type of negativity this propels into the universe. When the abused person goes home and is frustrated, he or she may continue the cycle and treat a friend or family member the same.

Treating people respectfully costs nothing and takes little effort. All you should do is change your attitude and approach everything from a place of love. Once you do this, the love at work will be made visible.



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