

President's Message

Warm greetings to readers and fellow members of the Asian Association of Management Organisations (AAMO). I sincerely hope you are doing well and staying healthy.

We've thankfully bid farewell to another year marked by the ebb and flow of a continuing global crisis; and hopefully 2022 will be the one that heralds a new beginning. While the year began on a shaky note, with the new variant causing a resurgence in cases across the world; I am positive that as we move ahead, with our new found resilience, adaptability and agility – we will be able to surmount any challenges or uncertainties that the year might have in store for us.

The last two years have been about adapting and surviving, as some extreme changes were forced on us. But out of all this disruptive change came something incredible. We learned to work in an entirely different way. We collaborated, innovated, were agile and flexible. Essential qualities needed as we reinvent our organisations and business strategies. We've been living through the greatest workplace disruption in generations and now, as the dust settles; one fact becomes clear- we will have to continue to deal with change in the new normal. The good news is that we're getting better at it, and the practice of change management is evolving right along with us.

2022 is going to be the year where we pull it all together. Companies that have done well during the current crisis can turn their advantage into strong positions for years to come; while struggling companies can use the Covid-19 era as an opportunity to transform their businesses and join the winners. Organisations now need to switch from a survival mode strategy and utilise the knowledge and expertise gained to prepare for the future.

As businesses reset their strategies and game plans in the new normal, it is a time for organisations like AAMO, and the National Management Organisations to give business leaders and management professionals access to the latest management trends as they attempt to navigate the redefined paradigms of – hopefully – a post Covid world.

This issue of 'Leading the Way' explores new and emerging trends in management and leadership from the Asia Pacific region. Contributions from India – 'Beyond the call of duty' – highlights the growing importance of transformational leadership model that is servant-based when dealing with a distributed workforce; while 'Listen to your customers' explores management strategies that can help companies not only retain existing customers but also attract new ones. 'How senior managers can set the tone in a hybrid world' sheds light on how senior managers need to learn and practice critical skills to ensure that productive work is maintained; while 'How to banish unconscious bias to promote diversity in your workplace' focuses on the ways leaders can address bias, leverage diversity and practice inclusive behaviour – both contributions from Australia & New Zealand. An article from Macau titled 'A Practical Framework of Business Coaching' is the third and last episode of 'Business Coaching' – a series based on the basics of coaching in business.

Two articles from Malaysia include- 'Core Roles of a CEO' - the first of the three-part series, highlights the importance of the CEO's vision and contribution towards customer experience; while the second article- 'Turbulence Management: Leading in the Era of Pandemic' explains strategies for leaders to effectively lead through uncertainty and complexity. 'Data Science and Management Strategy in the

Organisation' comes to you from Nepal emphasising the importance of data science and digitisation in a company to experience innovation, modernisation, and efficient services. A unique perspective and strategy on the spectrum of life and decision making, is brought to you from Pakistan through an article titled 'The Strategy Spectrum'. Contributions from the Philippines include two articles- 'Amidst the Devastation of COVID-19, A Glimmer of Hope' that focuses on mapping the future with optimism; while 'Re-Learning Health Education, Preparing the Health Workforce' brings you insights on how Covid is changing our health realities and the emergent need to reconstruct the health system to be prepared for any other crisis in the future.

I do hope you enjoy this issue of 'Leading the Way' and look forward to your feedback and suggestions.



Rajive Kaul
President, Asian Association
of Management Organisations

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BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

A servant leadership model can serve the purpose best when dealing with a distributed workforce.



By Dr Sini V Pillai, Cet School Of Management College Of Engineering, Trivandrum

COVID-19 impacted all parts of life and has left a lasting impact on organisation and work culture. The traditional working model is losing ground and is struggling to transform and manage their distributed workforce. This changing work terrain calls for a changed transformational leadership model that is servant-based. You are a servant leader when you focus on the needs of others before you consider your own. For a distributed workforce this would be the best way to go about to make sure that its workers are motivated enough to contribute to the best of their ability without direct continuous monitored control.

Servant leadership is one of the core principles in scrum and agile management methodologies in software development. It is also being practised in some of the topranking companies and research confirms that with this model, employees go beyond the call of duty for the organisation. For servant leadership model to work in a distributed workforce, each leader in the leadership ladder has to transform to a servant leader, ready to share power and put the needs of the employees first.

A work culture based on complete trust and transparency has to establish. This will lead to growing employee commitment and engagement which will directly contribute to the productivity and growth of the organisation. In a distributed workforce it is very important to estimate work and delegate responsibility efficiently. This calls for strategic planners and visionaries on top tiers to plan, estimate, and delegate. Effective planning and management of all available resources lead to increased productivity. The planning and estimation work should never trickle down to the actual workforce.

Digital advancement makes it much easier to hold the distributed workforce together in a virtual workspace than ever before. Still when moving to a distributed workforce, the responsibility shifts from employer to employee to set up the physical workspace out of the office. For

effectiveness and productivity, the organisation should strive to provide employees the training and monetary support to set up that work infrastructure out of office.

It is also important to have checks and balances in place to help maintain equal workspace quality throughout the distributed workforce. Employees should be provided with adequate guidance and training to deal with the new workspace challenges and update new security practices. A strong 'digital security fortress' has to be built for the new age digital workspace. A huge investment has to go into making this digital workspace safe and accountable. The leadership should continuously communicate that it understands all the situations that their team members are dealing with.

Employees should feel that their voices are heard and their beliefs, values, and feelings are respected. They should feel the company trusts them. Employees should have the space to grow, not only in the professional areas but also in personal ones. Organisations should explicitly encourage and organise programs for Employees to maintain a good personal and professional life balance. Employee should feel the organisation is interested in their overall wellbeing.

A distributed workforce model also requires strategic planning to keep workers feeling responsible and bonded to the organisation as they are physically distanced from the traditional organization infrastructure. Gifts and souvenirs from the company will help employees identify themselves as part of the company. An incentive based reward system has to be in place rather than just using authority to push work. Efforts have to be invested in collecting employee satisfaction data and revamping and fine tuning the system.

Employees have to be engaged in programs to align themselves to the values and vision of the organisation. They require additional training on communication as it is the key that

connects the workspace. A digital communications etiquette and rule has to establish for proper effective and fast communication, even when virtually connected employees should be periodically provided the opportunity to socialise and bond.

It is also great if the organisation aligns to global wellbeing goals and programs so that each employee feels they are contributing to a bigger cause and being part of something bigger than just a team. As the current organisations structures are revamping to the new distributed workforce model it is important that the leadership is also retrained to regain better control of the workforce.



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LISTEN TO YOUR CUSTOMERS

A good customer experience management strategy will not just help retain existing customers but also attract new ones.



By Rakesh Goyal, Probus Insurance Brokers Private Limited

"It takes months to find a customer... seconds to lose one." - Vince Lombardi

Keeping the customers happy and satisfied is critical to the survival of business in today's 'customer's era'. Having a robust customer management system can help companies acquire new customers, retain the existing ones, and also convert potential customers to customers/consumers. Moreover, it has been observed that satisfied customers are likely to bring in more customers through word-of-mouth medium. Such a customer also holds the factor of loyalty to the brand, and, in return, enhances the reputation of the company.

Customer experience management (CEM or CXM) refers to various company policies or protocols that are designed to enhance the overall customer satisfaction. This enables the company or brand to increase customer loyalty towards them and ensure continuous as well as repetitive business.

A successful CEM system would help the business/company to obtain the following benefits:

- Enhance the experience of the existing customers;
- Give more insights on customers—it will help analyse the customer data and identify the upscaling factors;
- Combine data from different sources to create a collated data centre for customer analysis reports. Also, it would help in segmentation of the customers depending on their needs and help in acquiring better insights on their needs;
- Enhance customer retention;
- Anticipate the future needs of the customers through new and existing data.

CEM for today's organisations

Apart from being a sales opportunity or revenue generation medium, a customer, in today's world, is someone who can drive the business to great heights or knock it down quickly.

A company could have the best possible product in the segment, but if not sold correctly and treated the customers right,

then there is never a guarantee of it being a success. Having a well-organised CEM system helps build a robust relationship with customers. It is also critical to enhancing crisis management techniques for any business.

As per the Harvard Business Review, "Depending on which study you believe, and what industry you're in, acquiring a new customer is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one". It further says that, "If you're not convinced that retaining customers is so valuable, consider research done by Frederick Reichheld of Bain & Company (the inventor of the net promoter score) that shows increasing customer retention rates by 5% increases profits by 25% to 95%."

CEM system is also important to maintain the churn rate and increasing customer retention for a specific brand or company.

Impact on brand reputation & profits of the organisation

Inclusion of enhancing factors that improve customer relationship allows the organisations to manage, serve, acquire, and extract definite values from the customers and enhance the company efficiency by targeting the right audience. This also helps to establish robust long-term relationships that ensures that the customer keeps coming back, thereby creating new business for the company and expediting the RoIs. It also helps manage customer interactions effectively, and in return, enhance the brand reputation and achieve sustainable growth.

How can organisations achieve great customer experience?

While strategizing a great customer experience, organisations need to ensure that they do it for existing as well as new customers. Ensure that you have the right strategy in place to establish the required trust within your customers about your brand or company. Creating strategies and implementing them in the right way helps to upscale the reliability factor within the minds of the consumers. Creating quality

content that can be used to communicate with the customers both physically or digitally can also have a significant impact on the prospects and for generating new consumers for your products or business.

Make the best use of data

Ensure that you make the best use of data and insights in order to boost the sales and understand the future demand of your existing customers. Constantly reviewing your previous customer results can help identify whether you are putting the efforts in the right direction and targeting the right audience as per your product or business. As rightly quoted by Steve Jobs, "Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realise it themselves."

Keep your customers or prospects engaged

Prospects do not turn into customers overnight, nor does brand promotion happen in a single day. One needs to understand that this is a long process, and hence needs to be handled with a proper strategy. Keeping your customers or prospects engaged helps gain the confidence of the prospects and later turn them into customers.

Try to address the objections about your products

If your customer has some incorrect assumptions about your brand then it becomes your duty to identify those assumptions and address them. This creates a positive perception of your offering in the customer's mind.

Another factor that might impact your customer management process is selling harder to your customers. This is one of the biggest mistakes that many companies make. Such an action could be quite annoying at times—receiving considerable promotional emails on a busy working day, follow up calls, etc. Pushy sales are not likely to improve your conversion rates as the customer of today is far more educated and discerning.

Hence, designing and reacting to customer interactions or to meet/exceed customer expectations is highly necessary to ensure customer loyalty, satisfaction, and advocacy, and a good CEM strategy will help achieve this. While implementing such strategies, one might require to undergo certain alterations in the existing process and the existing technologies to ensure successful results.



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HOW TO BANISH UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN YOUR WORKPLACE



By Deb Travers-Wolf is a Member of IML ANZ and the CEO and founder of I LEAD Consulting.

When my mum worked in retail, I can still remember her saying: “If the cash register always balances, then you don’t know how big your problem is”. It sounds contradictory, but the reality is that we’re all human. The only way the cash register will balance seven days per week, 365 days per year – no exceptions, no mistakes- is if someone is fiddling the books.

In the same way, any manager or leader who says they’re without bias – no exceptions, no mistakes – is not being honest with themselves. Nobody is bias-free; if you have a brain, you have bias. It’s an important survival mechanism. Or as Hillary Clinton put it during the first 2016 US presidential debate: “implicit bias is a problem for everyone”. A good leader, then, will recognise their own biases and double-down on their attempts to overcome them. At the same time, they’ll embed a diversity and inclusion agenda throughout the entire organisation.

This article looks at the ways leaders can address bias, leverage diversity and practice inclusive behaviour at an organisational and team level. It also provides practical steps for mitigating bias in your personal leadership style. First, however, let’s spend a moment considering the rationale behind a diversity agenda, because the numbers speak for themselves.

Why diversity matters: The business case for banishing unconscious bias

The case for creating a genuinely diverse and inclusive workforce is compelling. By seeking out employees of different races, ethnicities, genders, ages, religions, abilities and sexual orientations, organisations have an opportunity to capture a richness of thought and experience. Show me an organisation that wouldn’t want to harness the value of that in today’s chaotic world.

Diversity brings higher value collective intelligence and drives innovation. Instead of two or three approaches to any problem, a diverse organisation is

endowed with many solutions and Harvard Business Review found that diverse companies are 70% likelier to capture a new market. Leveraging diversity and practising inclusion offers endless potential and opportunity – but you need both to optimise it.

And for anyone who needs any more convincing, consider this: The government’s Workplace Gender Equality Agency report (2020) found that profitability, performance and productivity increase under female leadership and female top-tier managers add 6.6% to the market value of ASX-listed companies (worth the equivalent of AUD\$104.7 million). McKinsey’s Diversity Matters report found companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. While Forbes reports that inclusive teams make better business decisions up to 87% of the time.

At the same time, investors increasingly expect to see disclosures around environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) measures. The allocation of capital is informed by these measures and if your organisation isn’t serious about diversity and inclusion – or you lack metrics around inclusion – then expect to miss out on investment.

Promoting diversity and banishing unconscious bias is a no-brainer.

How can leaders address bias, diversity and inclusive behaviour at an organisational level?

The first hurdle many managers and leaders face is quantifying (and qualifying) the extent of bias within their organisation.

Sometimes a lack of diversity is obvious. (For instance, not a single female CEO was appointed to ASX 200 companies in the past financial year.) Other times, however, a problem with diversity and inclusion can be harder to spot, especially when it comes to diversity of thought. True workplace diversity encompasses a

range of experiences, educational backgrounds, skillsets, beliefs, operating styles and personalities, and these things are harder to measure. Inclusion also means harnessing the contributions of neurodiverse thinkers, including those with dyslexia or those on the autism spectrum.

A lack of data around diversity is a serious issue for many organisations. Diagnostics can be helpful. For instance, IML ANZ’s DiSC behavioural profiling tools categorise employees based on four personal dimensions: dominance, influence, steadiness and conscientiousness. The DiSC tools cover: needs, tendencies, preferred environments and communication styles and are a powerful way for leaders to see the full breadth of thinking styles that are available within the organisation.

In addition to diagnostics, managers and leaders must structure the organisation for equity.

This means putting systems in place to create a level playing field for under-represented groups, including, but not limited to:

- recruitment practices
- hiring practices
- promotion practices
- development practices.

We shouldn’t stop there, however, the concept of “Culture Add” rather than the traditional “Culture Fit”, when making these decisions, offers tremendous opportunity to add assets we would have previously (unconsciously) counted out. It requires a mindset ‘flip’ – but once your eyes are open to its potential value, you become aware of a world of opportunity you’ve previously failed to recognise.

Australia is facing a chronic skills shortage right now, partly as a result of global restrictions on labour movement. Any manager that broadens their recruitment net to a bigger pool of potential talent will likely boost their organisation's diversity and enjoy a competitive advantage to boot.

Three steps for preventing bias in your personal leadership style

Of course, a good leader doesn't just promote diversity at an organisational level – they also walk the talk – that's the all-important inclusive behaviour. How, then, can managers and leaders overcome their own inherent biases in their personal leadership styles? Here's three practical steps:

1. It all starts with your mindset

What's your leadership mindset? Are you 'an expert' or 'an explorer'? Let me explain. I once had a university lecturer who stood in front of our class and maintained he was the global expert on that week's topic. He'd studied at world-class universities; he'd read everything currently published; there was no one who knew more than him. And while it's true he was very learned, today, it just isn't possible to know everything about any topic in every context. The world has changed and as leaders, we must too.

Those managers and leaders who consider themselves to be explorers are more likely to seek out ideas and perspectives that are dissimilar to their own, and their teams will be all the better for it. Practising inclusion – by going out of your way to uncover and value difference – is a conscious decision for so many of us who have been historically valued as experts.

2. Ask curious questions

It sounds like an obvious skill for an

effective leader but curiosity can't be underestimated. Particularly in the (increasingly common) hybrid work environment. This means consciously giving everyone equal airtime, not just the extroverts in the room. (True, their input is valuable but so are the (often more considered) ideas from the introvert who has listened and analysed, whilst others have been speaking.)

This also means giving everyone equal attention and respect. We've all heard about the female board member whose suggestion was ignored, only to have the idea praised when it came out of the mouth of the male sitting next to her. Give equal gravitas to all voices at the table. Make everyone feel listened to. Finally, good questions focus on what hasn't been mentioned. This goes back to my mum's comments about a suspiciously balanced cash register. When you're speaking with colleagues and teams ask yourself: What is it I'm not hearing? What's the feedback someone's too afraid to give? What's the alternative opinion that hasn't been put forward? What's the unvoiced perspective here?

3. Create a safe environment to debate

Of course, asking curious questions means nothing if you haven't fostered an environment where people feel safe to offer their own unique answers. Psychological safety is key to inclusion and diversity. Consider, for instance, how you receive unwelcome feedback or information. Do you respond angrily or impetuously even if the person delivering the news isn't at fault? By shooting the messenger we close communication channels and can lose valuable contributions, not just in that moment, but also for the future. People have very sensitive radars for potential threats to their status or credibility and they'll play it safe if they feel it's risky to air their views.

Increasingly, boards of directors use a skills matrix so that each board member is selected based on a specific, required contribution. Effectively it's a jigsaw puzzle, with the goal being to complete the whole puzzle. One person may have accounting qualifications, while another brings industry experience. This means everyone is acutely aware that each director is bringing something to the table and all opinions are respected accordingly. It's also common practice for the Chair to ask for every individual's perspective on a topic. It's an approach any team, at any level, can find value in.

Leaders can take it one step further by actively inviting dissent and debate. A fast, effective approach is to appoint a "devil's advocate" – someone who has explicit permission to challenge the status quo. (It's important to rotate the role, so it's not the same person always challenging the dominant team narrative!)

An environment where it's safe to explore, ask and debate is more likely to generate new ideas and identify hidden problems – such as a cash register that appears to balance with unerring, uncanny accuracy. And who knows? That team may also come up with an innovative new idea, which will render the cash register a relic of the past!

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HOW SENIOR MANAGERS CAN SET THE TONE IN A HYBRID WORLD

By Colin D Ellis



A hybrid working model won't be a 'nice to have' for organisations once we start to live in a COVID-normal world, it will be an expectation that employees have of senior managers.

The pandemic has proven – once and for all – that the technology to enable a workforce in multiple locations works exactly as we were told it would. It's just that management skills have yet to catch up, and that will become a problem for organisations that are looking to retain their talent.

When the first lockdown occurred in early 2020, few organisations were ready for hybrid work, yet the ones that adapted the fastest were the ones whose senior managers recognised that they had to up their game.

They had to let go of the expectations they had of seeing people at their desk from 9-5 every day and of only thinking that productive work could happen when everyone was located in the same space, and move to a model where trust was assumed, technology embraced and the focus was on outputs, not hours worked.

For many this was a tough move to make and entirely outside their comfort zone, yet make it they did and this resulted in consistently vibrant cultures, where work got done, staff looked after each other's mental health and celebrated the small wins along the way.

Employees have always looked to senior managers to set the tone. When they don't do so, then good people leave. As the saying goes, 'People don't leave organisations, they leave their bosses.' In a hybrid working world, talented people will be in demand from organisations around the world, so in order to not only keep these people but ensure that targets are met, senior managers need to up their game.

Senior managers need to up their people game

And at the heart of this improvement is the need to better connect with and

understand employees; How to motivate and inspire them, create a culture where they can do their best work and how to spot when they're struggling with their mental or physical health.

One study at the end of 2020 found that 83% of Gen Z employees (who make up over a third of the global workforce) would 'choose an employer with a strong culture of empathy over an employer offering a slightly higher salary.' The same study also reported that employees cited empathy as creating an environment that led to increased outputs and reduced turnover.

For many managers, this is not the training they received. Billions of dollars are spent every year by companies on leadership development programs that fail to teach managers the basic (emotional) skills required to connect on a human level with staff and to set and hold them to performance and behavioural expectations.

Active listening, trust, empowerment, compassion, expectation setting, courageous conversations, decision-making and strategic thinking are all critical skills that senior managers need to learn and practice to ensure that productive work is maintained, regardless of where employees are based.

High performing cultures don't create themselves

And employees will always be happiest when they work for a senior manager that not only understands who they are and can communicate with them in a way that they appreciate, but who builds a psychologically safe team environment where they can do their best work. Perhaps the biggest challenge for managers in a hybrid world is to build and maintain a vibrant culture without ever having everyone in the same space. However, this is exactly what the managers at remote-only organisations (such as Zapier) have been doing successfully for years.

They recognise that high performing team

cultures don't create themselves and put regular time and effort into defining the conditions for people to work together and that these principles are upheld. They need to ensure that people aren't discriminated against based on their location (or any other reason for that matter) and that language is inclusive at all times.

Many managers already do this and are able to maintain productivity and employee happiness regardless of whether they are in a crisis situation or not. This has to be the goal for all senior managers who wish to set the tone in a hybrid working world.

Organisations need to stop being lazy about leadership development and create bespoke programs to help their managers to become role models for others to follow. Anything less will likely lead to the loss of the very people they need to maintain success.

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Colin D Ellis is best-selling author of The Hybrid Handbook: How to Set Yourself Up for the Future of Work and helps organisations around the world to transform their working cultures.

A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK OF BUSINESS COACHING

Episode 3

By Brian Tang, Corporate Training Consultant



This is the third and last episode of “Business Coaching” – a series which aims to introduce the background and basics of coaching in business. In the first article I talked about the definition and myths of coaching. Then I introduced a basic yet important principle and questions to ask during a coaching conversation in the second article. I will recap the main points from the second article below. Readers are advised to refer to the previous issues for full details.

The fundamental principle of coaching is “The answer is already in the room”. The coachee is the best person to tackle the challenge at hand. Remember coaching is not for everyone – only those technically competent and mentally ready are suitable to be coached. Those who are not completely ready can be helped by a combination of methodologies, such as instructing, feedback, and training. In coaching, the coach must trust that the coachee can find the solution she is after. Hence the coach’s job is not to provide direct guidance on the coachee’s challenge, but using skillful questioning technique to help the coachee expand her thinking so that she can discover insight and blind spots that prevent her from resolving the challenge in the first place. The focus of questions is expansion and discovery – by stretching the coachee to think higher, farther, bigger and deeper. When the coachee’s thinking has expanded, she stands a higher chance to come up with the best solution.

In this article I will introduce a common framework in business coaching and discuss the common mistakes in using it.

Coaching Framework: A → B

This simple framework contains three elements: A, B, and the arrow pointing from A to B. The letter “A” represents the current state, while “B” is the future state, or the goal, the coachee wants to reach. The arrow is the process to go from A to B. Here’s a quiz for you: Out of the three elements, A, B, and the arrow, which element should take the longest time in the conversation?

A common mistake in coaching is that too much time was spent on the arrow, i.e. the “how” of reaching the goal. Similarly, a lot of effort was spent on discussing the goal and metrics. This happens the most when the coach herself is the superior of the coachee. When the staff is not meeting the standard, the manager tries to coach her and “set the target”. Hence they spend a great deal of time talking about the goal and the means of reaching the goal. This is not wrong, but the effectiveness of the coaching conversation is questionable. Without digging deep into the current state and understanding the root causes, it is unlikely that any “solution” as a result of the conversation can truly address the issue. For example, when you are driving and try to use GPS to get to the destination, the machine will determine your current location before it can calculate the best route for you. Using this analogy, the first and foremost element in the coaching framework is A (Know where you are), then B (Know what you want), and finally the arrow (Know how to get it). The coaching conversation should go in that sequence.

Framework: A → B

A (Know where you are)
B (Know what you want)
→ (Know how to get it)

Analyzing Current Situation: A

Analyzing current situation contains two parts: Understand where the coachee stands and why she got to where she is, and the latter is more important than the former. In the last article I used the example of a salesperson who wants to improve her low sales performance. The coach did not start by asking how much she wants to improve and what she can do to improve sales. Instead, the coach spent enough effort to dig into the causes of the current state using questions of expansion and discovery. You may refer to the last issue for the conversation. At the end, the coachee admitted that she has not been doing her job to develop new sales leads and take care of existing customers. If the conversation were to

continue, it might look like the following:

Coachee: I have not contacted as many customers as before, both in terms of generating new leads and taking care of existing customers.

Coach: I see. This sounds like worth discussing. Let’s dig deeper. How’s that?

Coachee: Sure.

Coach: You said you haven’t done as much for your customers as before. How did it compare to the past?

Coachee: In the pre-pandemic time I used to talk to at least 10-15 new leads per week. Now I talked to 5-6 per week at best.

Coach: It is quite a drop, isn’t it? What caused the change?

Coachee: I don’t know. I just don’t feel like doing it.

Coach: Tell me more.

Coachee: I had a pretty good conversion rate in the past. Roughly 30% of the calls I made were interested in the product and 10% would finally buy. Now the rate was much smaller.

Coach: How did you feel about that?

Coachee: I felt discouraged and frustrated.

Coach: Thanks for sharing your feeling. It must not be easy. You mentioned that the conversion is much lower now. Have you thought about what caused the change?

Coachee: I don’t know. I haven’t changed anything on my side, such as how and when I called, my pitch and offering, etc. I have been doing the same thing as always.

Coach: So your approach didn’t change, but the result has changed.

Coach: What do you think?

Coachee: The pandemic might have changed people's buying habits and desire. People are more likely to shop online than before. COVID-19 has changed the world after all.

Coach: That's interesting observation Susan. How did you come across that idea?

Coachee: I read it from an article from somewhere, and I remembered one of the top sales from my company has also mentioned about that.

Coach: It seems to me that we have discovered at least part of the reason why you have not been able to achieve the result you want.

Coachee: I think so. Thanks coach.

We will stop here for a while. As you can see, the coach spent enough time to dig into the cause of the problem by using expansion and discovery questions. It is the coachee, not the coach, who answers her own question. The coach might choose to continue digging deep into the current state by asking additional questions. For illustration purpose let us assume we have concluded the part of A – Current state analysis.

Now, the conversation continues...

Setting the Goal: B

Coach: Now we have some ideas of why you are where you are now, have you thought about where you want to go?

Coachee: I want to improve sales.

Coach: That's good. By how much?

Coachee: At least back to my pre-pandemic level.

Coach: Can you be a bit more specific?

Coachee: I got you. I need to reach \$2 millions of sales per month.

Coach: Other than the sales figure, are there any other figures that may indicate success?

Coachee: The sales number is all the counts, but there are other numbers that contribute to sales figure, such as number of new leads per week, number of calls to make, etc. As you know, it's a number game. The more actions you take, the higher the chance you close a deal.

Coach: Sounds good. Do you have targets for those numbers?

Coachee: I do, 15 new leads and 30 calls or contacts with existing customers per week.

Coach: Great. We have three targets in total: sales figure, new leads, and customer engagement. Do you have a timeline to achieve them?

Coachee: I don't think I have much time to play with. I have been slow for a few months, so I want to get back to my normal standard in two months' time.

Coach: I see. How about after that?

Coachee: I don't know. Don't have any idea. The pandemic situation may change at any time. I guess I will focus on getting back to normal as a priority, then we can set another target after. How's that?

Coach: Sounds good to me.

We'll pause again here. The identification of B, the goal, is relatively straightforward in this case. The coachee wants to get back to the normal standard of sales. The coach pushed her to be specific on the target, as well as defining "success" in multiple metrics. Again, expansion questions were used. Finally, the coach asked the coachee to put a timeline on it, which is crucial to establish accountability.

Establishing Actions – the Arrow

Coach: Now we've identified what you want to get. What's your plan to get there?

Coachee: I will work much harder than now.

Coach: Hard work is definitely important. Is that the only thing you need to do?

Coachee: Huh... I'm not sure.

Coach: Let me rephrase my question. If, two months from now, you have reached the sales figure you want. What must have happened between now and then?

Coachee: I must have worked hard on the indicators, such as number of calls per week, etc. But I think there should be more than that.

Coach: What else?

Coachee: I must have understood new customer preferences. We said COVID-19 has changed many things. Customers' preferences and buying behaviors have also changed as a result. I must try to understand that as well.

Coach: Sounds good. How would you like

to do that?

Coachee: I can talk to my colleagues who are doing well in sales and pick their brains.

Coach: Very well. Anything else?

Coachee: Huh... I can do some research on the internet. I don't think I am the only one in this industry suffering from the same thing.

Coach: That sounds like a plan. Can you think of one more way?

Coachee: I don't know. Can't think of anything.

Coach: Take your time.

Coachee: Maybe I can just ask the customers, my existing customers?

Coach: Why not?

Coachee: Ok, we are all set then.

Coach: Let me recap. To discover new customer insight, you plan to talk to your colleagues and existing customers, and do some research on the Internet.

Coachee: Yes!

Coach: If you are to pick one thing to begin with, what would you pick?

Coachee: I think I will speak to my successful colleagues. That's easiest to do and effective. Learn from the best!

Coach: Sounds like a plan. When should we meet again to review your progress?

Coachee: How about two weeks from now?

Coach: Sure. Thanks Susan. Good luck to you!

Coachee: Thanks coach. See you then.

That's the last part of the coaching conversation, focusing on the "how" – the arrow of moving from point A to point B. As usual, it was the coachee who came up with ideas on how to reach the goal. Notice that the coach rephrased the question when the coachee was unable to give a quality answer. The question guided the coachee to first picture the achievement of goal, "Imagine you have achieved (so-and-so) by (a timeline), what must have happened?" This approach turned the train of thought on its head – start with the end goal and work backward. It has a number of benefits. First, the coachee gets to visualize success in her brain, which increases her confidence and makes her feel empowered.

Second, when the end goal is clear, the gap between now and future becomes apparent. The best way to do this is to crystalize point A and point B either by writing them down on post-it notes, drawing them on papers, or creating a representation using LEGO® bricks, and placing them on a table with some distance apart, thus creating a physical “gap” between two points. Our brain often needs a reference point to think. When the gap can be seen, it can be filled.

Next, the coach asked the coachee to come up with three actions to fill the “gap”. Note that the coach didn’t start by saying “Now give me three strategies to reach your goal.” because such request will create stress for the coachee. The coachee simply asked the coach to think of actions to take, one by one, and didn’t stop until she has come up with three. Why three? Because it gives the coachee options. If the coachee only has one

strategy and it doesn’t turn out well, she is stuck. After three actions have been come up, the coachee has to prioritize one thing to start. This is crucial to establish momentum. If no priority was established, some coachees may never take actions because they don’t know where to begin. Lastly, the coach and coachee agree on a time to review progress. Business coaching rarely is a one-time event but rather a series of meetings in which the coach and coachee review progress and make new goals. Therefore, setting the schedule of the next meeting is often the last thing to do in a coaching conversation.

Stay Flexible in the Approach

We have covered a lot of grounds about coaching in this series, and we are close to the end by now. The coaching methodology and techniques I have written in this series was based on the original version of coaching, or “Pure Coaching” so to speak. However, in the everyday

business world, Pure Coaching may not be the right tool all the time, especially when the coach is the superior of the coachee. When the coachee lacks a certain skill or has low self-awareness, the coachee must employ other skills, such as instructing, feedback, and training, to help the coachee. One may argue that when the coach uses other skill, she is not technically a coach anymore. True, but as long as we can effectively and appropriately help the coachee, it doesn’t matter whether we put on a coach’s hat or a manager’s hat. As the saying goes, “No matter it is a black cat or a white cat, a cat that catches rats is a good cat.” Hold tight to the intention of helping others, but stay flexible in the approach. Hone your coaching skills, mix and match with other techniques, self-reflect and learn from your experience are the three things you can do to start your coaching journey. Happy Coaching!



CORE ROLES OF A CEO

By Asohan Satkunasingham



Broadly, the primary responsibilities of a Chief Executive Officer include making major corporate decisions, managing the overall operations and resources of a company and acting as the conduit of communication between the board of directors and corporate operations.

In acting as the conduit, the organisation usually sees through from the lenses of the CEO of the Board's business direction. The organisation with the collective strength of its people, carries out this direction to achieve the intended business vision. It is the people that give meaning to the "organic" version of an organisation. Without people, it is merely a dormant building. Hence, at all times, in every business undertaking, it is all about the CEO creating the employees' experience for greater products and services experience for the customers, which translates to better business results.

Based on this undertaking, a CEO's core roles could be summarised as follows:

C - Customer Experience
E - Employee Experience
O - Owner's Value

This article will spread over three series. In this first series, let us explore the first role of the CEO towards customer experience.

Customer Experience

In any businesses, the relevance and importance of a customer cannot be over-sighted. Generally, the CEO makes certain the organisation maintains constant awareness of both the internal and external landscape, opportunities for market growth, new industry development and etc. However, these are only possible when customers are treated to a level of experience that builds relationship to generate business repeatability and harness retention.

A CEO that realises that customer experience and relationship is the asset that leads to better revenues, will find ways to make this as a key differentiator for the organisation.

In order to provide this perspective, let's

me share a story (author unknown) about a taxi driver that took customer experience to a whole new level.

The story goes like this:

Harvey Mackay was waiting in line for a ride at the airport. When a cab pulled up, the first thing Harvey noticed, that the taxi was polished to a bright shine. Smartly dressed in a white shirt, black tie, and freshly pressed black slacks, the cab driver jumped out and rounded the car to open the back passenger door for Harvey. He handed a laminated card and said: "Hello. I'm Wally, your driver. While I'm loading your bags in the trunk, I'd like you to read my mission statement." Taken aback, Harvey read the card. It said: Wally's Mission Statement: To get my customers to their destination in the quickest, safest and cheapest way possible in a friendly environment. This blew Harvey away. Especially when he noticed that the inside of the cab matched the outside. Spotlessly clean!

As he slid behind the wheel, Wally said, "Would you like a cup of coffee? I have a thermos of regular and one of decaf." My friend said jokingly, "No, I'd prefer a soft drink." Wally smiled and said, "No problem. I have a cooler up front with regular and Diet Coke, water and orange juice." Amazed, Harvey said, "I'll take a Diet Coke." Handing him his drink, Wally said, "If you'd like something to read, I have The Wall Street Journal, Time, Sports Illustrated and USA Today." As they were pulling away, Wally handed Harvey another laminated card, "These are the stations I get and the music they play, if you'd like to listen to the radio." And as if that weren't enough, Wally told Harvey that he had the air conditioning on and asked if the temperature was comfortable for him. Then he advised Harvey of the best route to his destination for that time of day. He also let him know that he'd be happy to chat and tell him about some of the sights or, if Harvey preferred, he would be quiet and leave him with his own thoughts.

"Tell me, Wally," Harvey asked the driver,

"Have you always served customers like this?" Wally smiled into the rear-view mirror. "No, not always. In fact, it's only been in the last two years. My first five years driving, I spent most of my time complaining like all the rest of the cabbies do. Then I heard this personal growth guru, Dr Wayne Dyer, on the radio one day. He had just written a book titled 'You'll See It When You Believe It'. Dr Dyer said that if you get up in the morning expecting to have a bad day, you'll rarely disappoint yourself. He said, "Stop complaining! Differentiate yourself from your competition. Don't be a duck. Be an eagle. Ducks quack and complain. Eagles soar above the crowd". Well, that hit me right between the eyes," said Wally. "Dr Dyer was really talking about me. I was always quacking and complaining, so I decided to change my attitude and become an eagle. I looked around at the other cabs and their drivers. The cabs were dirty, the drivers were unfriendly, and the customers were unhappy.

So, I decided to make some changes. I put in a few at a time. When my customers responded well, I did more." "I take it that has paid off for you," Harvey said. "It sure has," Wally replied. "My first year as an eagle, I doubled my income from the previous year. This year I'll probably quadruple it. You were lucky to get me today. I don't sit at cabstands anymore. My customers call me for appointments on my cell phone or leave a message on my answering machine. If I can't pick them up myself, I get a reliable cabbie friend who is an eagle, to do it and I take a piece of the action." Wally was phenomenal! He was running a limo service out of a Yellow Cab. He had narrated his experience to more than 50 cab drivers over the years, and only 2 took the idea and ran with it. The rest of the drivers quacked like ducks and told Wally all the reasons they couldn't do any of what he was suggesting.

Hence, just like the customer experience that Harvey got, a CEO could develop more talents with Wally's attitude in his organisation.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Get Inside the Customer's Skin

Nothing beats developing a deep sense of relationship with customers and truly understand "what customer really wants?" since there is always a fundamental disconnection between the wants of a customer and what the business supplies or offers. Let's introspect by using Wally as an example.

Wally understood that he needs to understand his customer needs to create a compelling experience for them. The differentiator lies in Wally's attitude to be an eagle rather than a duck. He wanted to give his customers the kind of lingering experience with a compelling service; one that stands out and be differentiated from the crowded red ocean. Hence, he offered premium limousine services within a yellow cab outfit, creating his unique blue ocean.

Wally resonated well with a speech made by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa in 1890:

"A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption of our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider of our business. He is part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us the opportunity to do so."

Therefore, if a CEO could get his employees inside the skin of their customers, it will serve to develop compelling experience, soaring the Company's revenue like an eagle.

2. Break the Technology Addiction

Let us be clear here. Technology does not have all the answers and it cannot auto-serve a customer. Technology is a tool and knowing when and how to use it without compromising and undermining

customer care. A CEO has every right to invest in these tools, but don't let them replace in-person conversations and customer relationship. Wally is a fine example of high personal touch builds greater customer experience. Remember, high technology must be reciprocated with high personal touch. Otherwise, the low touch will slowly disintegrate every level of customer service and eventually lose the customer in the long run. I am sure, many of us have undergone bad customer experience from automated call centres. Machines that take us on a merry-go round crusade without even fulfilling our call intent and purpose.

3. Pay for Relationship Quality

People will do what they are financially being incentivised. The CEO that supports its employees to have a customer-centric transformation are sat to score in revenue with a measurement of each function's role in delivering compelling customer experience. Instead of the customary Management by Objective, churn or close rate, a CEO must consider performance metrics that are aligned with customer experience, customer engagement and peer scoring to build long-term relationship quality with customers. Wally knew that it pays to enhance customer relationship quality when a customer through the power of word of mouth becomes an ambassador to promote the products and services offered.

4. Collaboration is the Lifeblood

Once a CEO is able to drive together with its employees, a customer centric organisation, the spirit of collaboration becomes high; a secret ingredient to deliver consistent, meaningful experiences and relationship with customers. It builds a high-performance team and culture for the organisation. Positively, Wally was ahead from other taxi drivers

as he provided exceptional services, thus creating a collaborative gain to both Harvey by being offered premium services at the price of a yellow cab and Wally to have quadrupled his income by responding to his customer's wants.

I reckon the covid-19 experience has also thought us the importance of collaboration. A tiny unseen virus through its chain, successfully spread its influence around the globe and resetting many things in human lives. Hence, collaboration of the organisation and customer is a vital chain and lifeblood for business sustenance. Lastly, at some point a CEO will also become a customer to procure a product or services from other organisations. If the CEO fails to enjoy a good experience from that organisation, it becomes a learning point for his/her organisation, so that such mistakes are not repeated in enhancing customer experience. In our second series, we will examine the second role of how a CEO creates employee experience to support their customer experience.

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TURBULENCE MANAGEMENT: LEADING IN THE ERA OF PANDEMIC

By Imran Kunalan, Adjunct Professor- UNITAR International School
& CEO/Founder of Bursabakat.com



The Covid-19 pandemic rage which commenced in early 2020 did not spare anyone and impacted the entire world, almost crippled some economies, displaced society, and pushed the governments of the day to manage the crisis in an un-anticipated manner! Governments across the globe not only had to intervene aggressively in managing the disruptions in society but more importantly had to also support the economic activities to ensure they are kept alive to wade through the pandemic. This is done with the hope that eventually the pandemic will be over and recovery anticipation. The mantra of the early days of the pandemic was businesses must pivot to return to a normalcy, which no one knew how it would look or when it is expected to happen!

The pandemic despite posing tremendous pressures and challenges, did provoke both businesses and governments to revisit their crisis management strategies and plans. Organisations which were in their comfort zone assuming their business continuity plans (BCP) were robust and only assessed through simulations periodically using anticipated scenarios tests, realised that there are unknown and unanticipated circumstances like the Covid-19 pandemic which presented to be the real test of their risks management! The pandemic did open the Pandora's box on BCP weaknesses as well as the external elements which may not have been considered in carving out the action plans. Reality did set in for a number of organisations! The domino effect of the pandemic almost crippled the society at large.

Lockdowns imposed to curb the spread of the disease resulted in some business operations to be completely shut down or to be run with skeleton number of employees. Tremendous pressure was exerted in the healthcare facilities and services. Supply chains were broken. Mobility of individuals were hampered. The aviation industry almost collapsed due to movement control at domestic and international levels. The domino effect

ascended to the hospitality and tourism sector which includes the food and beverage operations. Society faced the ultimate brunt of the impact! Job losses, reduction in income, movement restrictions, broken food supply chain and a pressurised healthcare system! Economic activities in general were loomed by dark cloud of uncertainties. Management and leaders scrambled with the possible means to wither the negative impact and sustain their business operations with whatever resources and support available!

CEO, Satya Nadella quoted, "We've seen two years' worth of digital transformation in two months." This trend has been particularly visible at all levels of government across the globe.

Undertaking fundamental digital transformation to remove unnecessary processes and move to a 'to be' model, delivers greater effectiveness in terms of improved citizen and workforce experience as well as long-term cost savings.



On the flip side, the pandemic did trigger some positive outcome as well. Digital adoption is one positive beneficiary from the pandemic. Businesses which were reluctant to adopt or invest in digital technology and processes were forced to embrace technology to keep afloat. Selling products and services through online platforms became a mainstream agenda during and post pandemic. Governments were also forced to leverage on technological means to render their services. There was a drastic metamorphosis from face-face interaction to online methods and approaches. Most of the governments have embarked on digital transformation but the pace was slower than how it could have been managed. Thanks to the pandemic, some of the transformations were forced to happen almost immediately. As Microsoft

The pandemic pushed for a new type of relationship between managers and their subordinates. The working relations amongst them evolved. The diagram below is a visual representation of the new work environment.

According to WEF, COVID-19 pandemic has changed people's attitudes towards institutions in general, and towards employers. There is a need for managers to reframe their approach towards employees and turn their organisation into a flexible and responsive institutions. This applies for both the government and the economic sector.

According to WEF, COVID-19 pandemic has changed people's attitudes towards institutions in general, and towards employers. There is a need for managers

reframe their approach towards employees and turn their organisation into a flexible and responsive institutions. This applies for both the government and the economic sector.

What are some of the leadership's lessons from the pandemic? What should they do? Listed below are extracts from a HBR research which highlights some key actions for leaders in managing crisis scenarios like the pandemic.

Half the battle is won if the above actions are taken during the crisis. Many a time, we do see leaders down-playing realities and trying to divert attention during crisis. The repercussion can be excruciating once the facts or truth surface.

elements, which may be un-known and change over time in unpredictable ways. An action or change in one dimension can result in disproportionate and unforeseen outcome in a complex scenario. A good leader should know the difference and use distinct approaches to address the issue in hand.

Let go of perfectionism.

Leaders should not be obsessed with perfectionism. The complexity that is faced may warrant multiple iterations of possible solutions along the way. Don't expect an issue to be resolved by a single approach unless we are crystal clear on the root causes and workable solutions to address the challenge. Bear in mind the pandemic scenario we are facing has no single way of being addressed. We had

the organisation. Leaders need to reach out to the real subject matter experts to seek their views and opinions. There is a limit on how much one can do. Hence the need to open the door and mind to get input from others is another crucial strategy. Leveraging on networks is essential!

Zoom out

Instead of looking inwards with a narrow perspective, leaders need to zoom out and get a wider perspective on the issue in hand. They should be on an elevated vantage point to get a comprehensive overview, what are the various components within the ecosystem impacting or creating the challenge and derive to the solutions with multiple approaches. By zooming out, a leader is able to have a holistic perspective and greater adaptability in resolving complex and complicated issues.

The above strategies, if followed diligently will allow us to become better leaders and face any forthcoming challenges which is almost became part and parcel of the VUCA world we are in today. We may not be able to control the degree of challenges and problems, but we have the ability address the challenges head on with the right approaches.

What's instinctive when facing uncertainty

- Waiting for additional information
- Downplaying the threat and withholding bad news
- Doubling down to explain your actions more clearly
- Staying the course

What's needed in a crisis

- Acting with urgency
- Communicating with transparency
- Taking responsibility and focusing on solving problems
- Engaging in constant updating

Source: Michaela J. Kerrissey and Amy C. Edmondson

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Six Strategies for Leading Through Uncertainty

In order for leaders to effectively lead others in, increasing complexity, leaders must first learn to lead themselves. Although each leader faces their own unique circumstance, the HBR research has postulated six strategies that accelerate the leader's ability to continually learn, evolve, and navigate progressively when faced with more-complex challenges.

Embrace the discomfort of not knowing

It's natural for us to try to avoid the unpleasant feelings. However, it stifles the learning capability to drive future growth and impacts performance. Leaders need to be prepared to acknowledge and embrace discomfort as part of the learning process to overcome the unpleasant scenario they are challenged with.

Distinguish between complicated and complex.

There is a tendency to use the terms complicated and complex interchangeably despite both represents differing circumstances. Complicate denotes highly technical in nature and difficult to understand, but it can be broken down into discreet components. While complex comprises many interdependent

the vaccines that was rushed to reduce the impacts of the virus but only to realise that mutation cannot be avoided and resulted in the multiple doses and boosters. This is just one example.

Resist oversimplifications and quick conclusions.

Oversimplifying challenges can prove to be futile effort as well. We tend to break the challenges into multiple subcomponents which can be a pragmatic approach, but these may also lead to narrow vision and give a false sense of security. Using past incident as analogies may sound as a good approach but present nuances should be identified to get a clearer vision of the challenges. Rushing for conclusion or resolution minus the balancing act will lead to further complications and frustrations. There is need for a disciplined approach to find the right solution.

Don't go it alone.

Leaders are not superhumans who can resolve all problems by themselves. There is always a tendency for leaders to isolate themselves and try to work on solutions all by themselves. Don't let the ego to overtakes rationale! The pandemic we faced is not a battle for one person to handle. It requires expertise from varying functionalities since the impact is across

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DATA SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN THE ORGANIZATION

By Dharam R. Padhaya, MSIT ISM MPM MBA/PhD©



Dharam R. Padhaya has been an innovative and visionary leader working in the data management and analytics area for the past 13 Plus years. Dharam has taken the leadership to implement data management solutions for many organizations to improve decision support systems, creation of precision medicine, patient care and treatment, legitimate clinical trials, emerging research outcomes, and customer experiences in the US. He has been part of the world-renowned cancer research center-City of Hope National Medical Centre in California, patient treatment centers with numerous hospitals groups- Hackensack Meridian Health in New Jersey and many other companies in the US. Currently, Dharam is designated as head of Enterprise Data warehouse, Chief Data Architect/Engineer, Data Science, and Analytics for Hackensack Meridian Health. Dharam has an honored with strong education background with MIS/MISIT, MBA, MPM, and Ph.D. in IT from various accredited universities from the US. In addition, he has obtained dozens of certifications and honors from various organizations. He serves as a guest speaker in a popular forum and provides advocacy to numerous companies for the upmarket data management solution, data strategy, mission, vision, etc in the US. He is a lifetime member of the "National Society of Leadership and Success", "Golden key International honored society", "Sigma Beta, Delta" and Others.

Why data science and Digitization

Data and digital systems becoming an integral component for decision making, business service improvement, and observing the future in the present. A data strategy is a highly recommended and important process to support the acquisition, organization, analysis, and delivery of data in support of business objectives. In addition, government and non-government organizations can take advantage of data to create the overall organization roadmap to see the future in the present. However, the leader in the organization denominating the value of data and the importance of digitization.

Therefore, it is impacting business growth, human skill development, financial growth, and overall development of the organization and nations.

Data and information both are slightly different things concerning the utilization. Data simply represent the raw format of the information therefore, people can not utilize the data directly without formatting it on appropriate business forms. Appropriate tool technology, process, strategy, etc are required to transform the raw data information into the business form. Many countries are behind in digitization, data/ information modernization, advanced analytics, and data science. The data management system is a matter for every organization. Many people are confused about the data management system and think that it is a software package to manage the databases. But Data management systems are not only limited to software, hardware, and data but it is an overall strategy that covers, organizational business flow, data resources, managing data folios in a systematic way, presenting the data in a business understandable format. Data is the only factor that can explain the facts but how the organizational system is utilizing the data for the operational activities is an important point here.

Data becoming the foundation for predictive analytics, natural language processing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and many other data operations. This may not be possible for every country and organization to establish all services but it is important to set up the foundation to implement minimum services in the company. The minimum utilization of the data can be business utilization and reporting so that executive leadership can analyze the business situation on a single page. Currently, companies are making blind decisions and running business operations using the traditional perception model. But there is gradual development in the system but companies are still behind.

Perhaps, some companies are not even following the appropriate discipline to

store the information. I would like to explain some appropriate examples of how the companies can adopt the data practices. Financial companies can utilize data for the financial decision, understand the consumer's economical situation and offer them different opportunities (personal loan, housing loan, business loan, etc) rather than waiting for the consumer to come to the door. In addition, financial officers can analyze the business dashboard for the new service agreements, financial statement analysis, service line improvement, and others. Similarly, healthcare companies can use the reporting platform for patient admission/discharge, hospital billing, patient care services, visiting schedules, etc.

Ways to establish Data management services

If the companies are not practicing the data management services then it is the right time to start because the foundation of the business will depend on data eventually and companies will not improve if the organizational system is not upmarket or established. Organizational business success depends upon how data are accessible and transformed into a business. Leaders need not merely "tear down silos," but strategically work with data where it resides to bring data to every decision. A company can start creating small prototype projects by taking a subset of data and build an end to end data solutions. However, identifying the appropriate resources is also required such as data analysts, report writers, data managers/officers, ETL developers, and other subject matter experts. Business understanding is very important before creating any data strategy. Therefore, business leaders can work with IT expertise for business resolutions using technology solutions. Hence, IT and business collaboration are very essential to properly form the technology for accomplishing the business needs. Cloud computation and emerging technology systems are new to many companies but still, an organization can take advantage of the upmarket technologies to create an advance and

efficient data strategy.

Nepal is a growing country in every business domain but still behind in digitization, technology innovation, and modernization according to the world bank. World bank report also says that Nepal will need to reform the tourism sector to meet the expected changes to demand and preferences how other global countries are transforming. But tourism is just an example here but leaders must recognize the importance of the data and adopt the technology for modernization, cost efficiency, effective decision support system, improve customer services, and reliable outcomes

and adopt and apply in every business sector. Government and private firms are spending huge costs for manual activities, making many unmatured decisions, delays in project implementation, and others. Therefore, every leader in the organization should recognize the importance of the data and initiate the data management system to improve the growth, efficient customer services, cost-effective project implementation, and others. Data operations are in every sector such as education, finance, healthcare, telecom, and others. If the country's and organizational leaders implement data services in every sector then companies and customers can experience innovation,

modernization, efficient services, and at last improve the lively hood for the society and community as well.



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THE STRATEGY SPECTRUM

By Sarfaraz A. Rehman, MD/CEO, Fauji Fertilizer Company Ltd. Pakistan



Recently, asked to explain strategy in the spectrum of life and decision making, the best I could think of was to visualise two different stories.

The Elevated View

Imagine you are on a busy street in a large city, caught up on the ground in a traffic snarl. Suddenly, like Icarus and Daedalus, one gets wings. You start rising and spiraling upwards. Soon you are at a bird flight level and can see many roads and most of the city. You realise that the traffic snarl was just for a short juncture and by making a small turn you can go free. The street level is fire-fighting operations and the bird's eye view is a tactical level.

Next you keep rising and are at an atmosphere level viewing much of the country. The expanded view is much wider and larger, and yet has fewer details. That is alright, because you realise that the city is not the only place; much beauty and comfort exists in rural areas and other cities. One can move to other places and do other things. We are able to strategise and make larger and more long reaching decisions. That is the strategy level.

Now, unlike Icarus, you fly higher and nearer the Sun, but do not lose your wings. Up in space you can see the whole world. It's the most amazing view and is actually a Vision. Once up there, you can do just about everything by simply viewing the world, thinking larger than life and delegating the related strategy to others. This Visionary element is granted

to few and far between in a single life. This is a scale above strategy, but while strategy can more or less be a constant in life, a Vision will come rarely.

On the Ground View

A bunch of people are on a bus, which has broken down in a forested and hilly region. You have been charged to get the others out of there to safety. People are scared and most do not want to leave the safety of the bus. What to do?

First you go outside and climb the top of the bus and look around. Visible on an elevated ground is a lighthouse tower, which is considered to be safety for all. This becomes your Vision. We have to achieve it any which way.

Also visible is a set of open areas along the way to the lighthouse, which can be joined together like dots, to form a rough road to the lighthouse. To form the road to the lighthouse is strategy.

We then organise a few who are willing to get down and push the bus. The others who are scared stay inside the bus. Our workforce pushes the bus and also clears up hurdles and forms a path. You appoint a manager to coordinate and guide them from the bus top. So the guys who are doing the ground work are foot soldiers doing the fire fighting and operations. The manager on the top, is aware of wider surroundings and plans the activity from clearing to clearing. So he is doing the guidance and tactical work, ensuring that he keeps the bus moving along.

Lastly, you are also on the bus top, but do not have to worry about the managerial work, as that is someone else's responsibility. No, you are keeping in sight the various clearings which make the broad road to the lighthouse. We want to ensure that the strategy of getting to the lighthouse remains intact. Every now and then you get feedback from the manager on progress and difficulties. Using that feedback, you keep adjusting the route a bit, hence ensuring the overall strategy.

This feedback loop is a normal part of reality being shaped into the strategy. Never at any time will the Vision (of safety at the lighthouse) change. True, that once we get to the safety of the lighthouse, then we will review the 'situation' to cast a new Vision, but that is after we have achieved our present Vision.

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AMIDST THE DEVASTATION OF COVID-19, A GLIMMER OF HOPE

By Dr. Niceto “Nick” S. Poblador



For all the pain and suffering caused by the coronavirus infection, it has also given us reasons for optimism about the future.

It has accelerated the pace of development of life-saving vaccines

A major cause for elation about what is arguably the worst viral scourge in recent memory is how it has hastened the development of life-saving vaccines that used to take years to develop.

As *Washington Post* Columnist Fareed Zakaria recently observed, “... the one thing that distinguishes this pandemic from all previous ones in history was the speed with which humankind came up with a vaccine.”

We refer, in particular, to the accelerated pace of development of an anti-COVID vaccine based on mRNA technology.

On November 9, 2020, or barely a year since the outset of the pandemic, Pfizer made the startling announcement that its COVID-19 vaccine, co-developed with German biotechnology company BioNTech using the mRNA platform, is over 90 percent effective in preventing the illness. mRNA technology has since become the *de facto* industry standard in developing vaccines and the entire range of lifesaving drugs and therapies.

In a related and equally surprising move, Big Pharma appears to have seized the moment when many of its major players decided to join forces in three essential areas to fight back the deadly virus: devising diagnostic tests to identify those who are infected with the virus and those who are not, coming up with therapies that will shorten the course of the disease and lessen its severity, and developing vaccines to stem its further spread.

In another sharp break from the past, major Big Tech players Microsoft, Google, and Facebook have joined forces with other tech companies in a collective initiative to share information to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

These collaborative initiatives stand in stark contrast with the heavy-handed competition that has long been the hallmark of Big Pharma and Big Tech.

It has ushered in an era of open data

One of the more ominous signs of the times is the increasing monopolization by a handful of Big Tech players of Big Data and the platforms used to process these data, along with the key apps on those platforms.

To counter these worrying trends, government regulators in the both the U.S. and the European Union are prompting major tech firms, such as Google, Amazon and Microsoft, on veiled threat of harsher regulatory measures, to make their data and software more accessible to smaller tech firms and to consumers. The European Commission for Competition has been notably resolute in its effort to curb the unfair competitive practices of major industry players, notably those in the ICT sector.

Private sector initiatives include Microsoft’s plans to launch 20 data-sharing groups by 2022 and give away some of its digital information, including data it has aggregated on COVID-19. In encouraging more non-commercial sharing, Microsoft is developing software, licenses and governance frameworks that permit the firm to trade data or provide access to them without losing control.

It has initiated a shift in business strategy towards greater concern for the wellbeing of all stakeholders

We have noted elsewhere that by far the most transformative change that is taking place in the corporate world as a result of the pandemic is the apparent shift in the strategic focus of corporate CEOs and business leaders away from the traditional goal of shareholder wealth maximization to the more inclusive and mutually beneficial concern for the economic well-being of ALL other corporate stakeholders — their customers, their

workers, their business partners, and the community.

If anything, the COVID-19 pandemic has sent the powerful message to corporate managers the world over that their economic fortunes and those of their other stakeholders are intimately and inextricably intertwined, and that what benefits or adversely affects one will also be felt by all others. The realization that “we’re all in this together” has tended to foster closer ties between business firms and their stakeholders.

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(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines or MAP. Feedback at <map@map.org.ph> and <nspoblador@gmail.com>. For previous articles, please visit <map.org.ph>)

RE-LEARNING HEALTH EDUCATION, PREPARING THE HEALTH WORKFORCE

By Alma Rita R. Jimenez



An article that came out in FORTUNE appears to foretell the disruption that has started- and will gain momentum in the future. Who among us would have imagined that “the new path to a six-figure salary will no longer require a college degree?” Where will this leave the colleges and universities? How will the academe remain relevant – and more importantly, how will education morph?

The answers to these questions will not be easy because they will entail major changes in what is and what was. Industries are being disrupted, ignited by the measures undertaken to contain the pandemic. The many subjects, that form part of the curriculum implemented to get students ready for employment, may not even be applicable anymore with the transforming and restructuring being done as an offshoot of the crisis.

The health industry is at the center of these storms as the inadequacies of the health systems surfaced in this crisis. We thought that we were making tremendous progress in health care until we were stopped on our tracks by this small speck of a virus. The health industry is part of a world that was conditioned to think treatment rather than prevention; where disease protocols are focused on the body systems rather than in the patients as individuals with different needs and circumstances; where technology is pursued regardless of the cost, and where life gets extension without regard for the quality of living. This is an industry that only measured patient’s outcomes while in the care system, rather than adding value to the communities where facilities operate by improving population health.

COVID-19 is changing our health realities. Groaning under the weight of the care burden now, we need to reconstruct the health system into one that will be more sturdy, resilient, and agile if we are to be prepared for disaster and other crisis in the future. We do want to see our world stop turning- ever again.

The lockdowns, social distancing and

other measures imposed to contain the spread of the infection have accelerated the adoption of major trends we used to just tiptoe around with – among them:

- Digital health is here to stay. The use of telehealth, telemedicine, web consultations, contact tracing, health data analytics – modalities resisted by practitioners and other health professionals so long until that choice had been taken away.
- Health consumers active in their own care. Because hospitals and other health providers became inaccessible, people are now more conscious of prevention and started to learn self-care. Expect patients to participate in health decisions now more actively and this will force the health industry to become more person-centered, personalized, and transparent.
- Communication and messaging are critical to health care. The pandemic spawned infodemic – and that means the health sector will need to counter these by providing rational and fact-based information to the patients/health consumers.
- The cost structure will change as patients will want higher quality service that is accessible, affordable, and available.

The health delivery system will be reconfigured. The traditional health equation has always been health care is sick care, is hospital care. The fear of hospitals now will hopefully signal a shift to what should be – accessing health care at facilities and with providers according to the level of patients’ care needs. That means:

- More focus on prevention rather than cure, more primary care than hospital care;
- Integrated delivery networks that service holistically rather than in fragmented parts;

- From large academic medical centers to community and population health;

- From physician-centered care to multi-disciplinary teams supported by special skills in a continuum of care that happens in multiple settings.

Therefore, the health care workforce will have to likewise transform to be in step with these trends that will require new skills, even new health professions. The shortages being experienced now is a signal of the need to recalibrate skills and allow the entry of new players to augment the health system requirements.

The education sector will feel the most impact in these shifts. On the educators will fall the responsibility of preparing the students- the next generation- how to live, survive and thrive in a radically changed world. That is a challenge because who can even say they understand the world now – much more start teach the hows and whys? One thing is certain – the way education is being delivered must undergo structural change to rise to the call of the times, starting with adopting a more liberal mindset.

On the flipside, these challenges will also unlock potential opportunities for the education sector to help, rather than hinder the flow that can no longer be stemmed. Where and how?

Heading the list will be public health - a top global agenda that the academe should prepare for because reforms will certainly be instituted. We will see health systems decentralized to enhance containment capabilities. That means rural communities will need help through simple/basic training for self-care to lessen the burden to the health system. The academe can work with LGUs in providing these in a less structured, more progressive ways that will help skill building and promote lifelong learning. Equivalency is an idea whose time has come.

It is also way past time to introduce in curricula across levels and industries well-care, and treat prevention and maintenance of health as equally important as curative care. This need is highlighted with the rise of mental health issues. When students join the work force, the burden is shifted to the employers to worry about their mental health – and many times, they are not even work-related.

Ways must be explored to bring in alternative health care into the system, such as the initiatives of providing herbal medicines as cheaper drug choice. This was successfully undertaken by the likes of Dr. Krisana Kraisintu, and models are available on how to replicate them. Communities will benefit from these, both as providers and consumers of the products, but it will need the support of pharmacists and doctors like her to train them. How can the academe recognize and formalize these in the rural setting?

Discussions have already started about the aging populations, especially in the Asia Pacific region. What courses can we now design to get students trained for this emerging challenge and its various complications? Studies are showing that while people are living longer, the

extended years have not resulted in better quality of life. There are a lot of opportunities here for short and full courses, in areas such as providing care for Alzheimer's, chronic dementia and other conditions associated with aging.

The universities and colleges need also to expand their market from that of the traditional ones. The WFH, the new protocols, the changed industry practices – these require new skill sets from the current workforce, and more urgently at that. Upskilling and reskilling them, and steering them to new directions in their careers are as important as the students who are now learning online. Bringing those already employed back into the fold to re-educate them will not only help alleviate adjustment problems – it can become a potentially productive market niche.

For sure, there is a lot of hard work to be done. Re-learning is also a requirement for those who teach. Educators will need an investment of time, patience, and curiosity, boosted by fearlessness and passion to be right fit for these new requirements. Educational and regulatory institutions should not kill these by the lethal combination of inflexibility, rigid structures, status quo, and the spirits that

no longer want to discover new frontiers.

Our collective future depends on how well the educational system question and disrupt its own familiar structures that served us for centuries – and initiate the changes that will enable the next-gen education, welcome hybrid and alternative learning systems, make space for out-of-the-box thinking and innovation, take steps to be partners in upskilling, reskilling and retooling the present and future workforce, and acknowledge that the best education we can give to our students will lie not only in finding the answers, but in asking the questions – because then, innovations follow.

If we do our jobs right, we will pave the way for a generation that will be members of a health community that work seamlessly in providing quality and responsive health care to the population.

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About AAMO:

AAMO is a partnership of National Management Organizations (NMO) whose purpose is to share and actively leverage resources to enhance the achievement of their respective missions. AAMO is an independent, nonpolitical and not-for-profit Association of NMOs, which promotes, facilitates and supports the development of professional management in the Asia Pacific Region.

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