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President's Message

The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath have ushered in a new era known as the "New Normal," which has significantly impacted our personal and professional lives. Within the workplace, both leaders and employees must collaborate to adapt to this new reality and navigate the disruptions that have been further exacerbated by challenging geopolitical circumstances and their economic implications.

However, certain fundamental skills, such as leadership abilities, effective communication, and general people management skills, remain relevant and advantageous for companies and organizations, regardless of the prevailing business climate or whether it is the old normal or the new normal.

Dr Sumanta Dutta in “A Groundwork for New Learnings” astutely emphasizes the importance of practicality, fairness, empathy, and care in leadership, as these qualities are essential for building a successful company. Happy and contented employees are more productive, ultimately leading to a mutually beneficial outcome for individuals and organizations alike. Expanding upon this notion, Mr Muniinder K Anand's article, "Course Correction", underscores the significance of mastering the skill of providing honest and constructive feedback, which he refers to as "impact feedback." Additionally, he outlines common pitfalls that leaders should avoid when delivering feedback.

Furthermore, Professor Eddie Yu in “Managing the Unprecedented Challenges in the New Normal Environment” delves into the topic of leadership. He not only highlights prevalent mistakes often found in business school curricula, such as outdated case studies and an excessive focus on competition but also shares with readers his "Yu's 3H Holistic Management Framework." This framework offers an approach to problem-solving and holistic management of people and organizations.

In his article titled "Condition-based Conversations," Mr Brian Tang explores the significance of such conversations and why they surpass standard Q&A exchanges. He provides readers with a step-by-step guide on creating condition-based conversations that will bring multiple benefits to all parties.

Lastly, in "Leadership in Turbulent Times: Navigating a Brighter Future," Prof. Dr. Yusliza Mohd Yusoff and Muhammad Hamza Qummar emphasize visionary leadership's importance in the post-pandemic global economy. They stress innovation, social equity, and global collaboration for resilience and sustainable prosperity. Blend historical wisdom with contemporary innovations to address unprecedented challenges and steer societies towards inclusivity, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

Happy reading!

SK Cheong,
President, Asian Association of Management Organisations

contents

APRIL - JUNE 2024

Hong Kong

Managing the Unprecedented Challenges in the New Normal Environment

Dr. Eddie Yu,
The Hong Kong Management Association

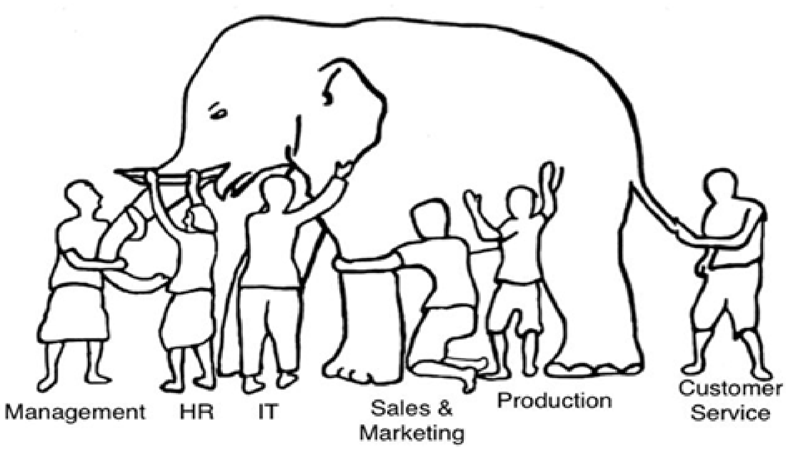
Don't look for a recipe-type of solution for managing today's unprecedented challenges. We need to create a new paradigm in thinking to survive and thrive in the New Normal environment. Unfortunately, many business schools' programmes, which shape the minds of their BBA and MBA graduates, are futile if not counter-productive in preparing our students for managing unprecedented challenges.

The pitfalls of Business School curriculums

The first pitfall is case study, which is the prevailing teaching method in Business School. Cases are created based on historical events. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, none of the business management textbooks or cases have written to educate how managers and organisations manage pandemic-driven challenges. Facing such challenges that they have not drilled in cases at Business School or experienced in real life, managers were caught unprepared. We learned we need to educate managers to build a new organic paradigm in managing new challenges.

The second pitfall is related to the structure of the business school curriculums. A business school is typically structured with business functional departments, such as Marketing, Organisational Behaviour, HRM, Accounting & Finance, Information Systems, Operations, etc. Faculties of different departments are seldom collaborated through cross-functional research. Students, invariably, will choose "majors" among these functional departments, with which their university education will be focused on the courses/modules provided by these functional areas. Upon their graduations, they will typically pursue their careers in the field, related to their chosen majors.

Taking a silo view of an organisational problem is often narrow or counter productive



Source: CMS Wire

As Maslow cautioned: "if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." Also, as depicted in the blind describing an elephant diagram above, people describe an organisation problem with the perspective that was shaped by their education and experience. Apparently, the person can only obtain a partial, incomplete view of an object.

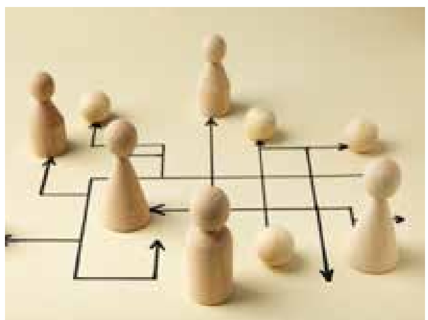
To remedy such pitfall, we need to develop our students with a holistic perspective to deal with the people and organisational issues. Such perspective is even more pressing in managing the current unprecedented challenges.

Another key pitfall is that the business school education tends to be obsessed with competition. Through subjects such as competitive strategy and industry analysis, they promote a zero-sum game mentality. For instance, the guru in the competitive strategy – Michael E. Porter, most of his works are emphasising on competition, which often aims for "I win you lose" outcome. The New Normal, especially in Asian culture, advocates long-term, mutually beneficial relationship with stakeholders (employees, customers, business partners, suppliers, financiers/investors, regulators, environment, community, etc.) to create a bigger pie in the market so that more participants can survive and even enjoy a larger reward; minimise unnecessary and avoidable costs of dog-fighting competitions and focus on value creation for all stakeholders. Dealing with human and nature created crises, we need to educate our students to develop altruistic and caring hearts.

To remedy the pitfalls of the Business School education, we need to educate students and managers with an organic and holistic perspective. Teach them tackling unprecedented challenges cannot rely on silo or zero-sum mentality; rather, they should be prepared to collaborate with other internal and external parties to solve the problems holistically. I named such perspective as the 3H holistic management framework.

What is 3H holistic management framework?

The 3H holistic management framework is an approach for managing people and organisations holistically. The metaphorical expressions of the 3H–Heart, Head and Hand represent the strategic alignment of the framework's key domains: purpose, people, culture, strategy, structure, function, systems and competence, etc. While there are generic domain objectives proposed for organisations, the timing, sequence, and application of exact elements of the 3H are context-dependent and specific to individual firms. Ideally, major decision making in an organisation should be a structured deliberative process guided by the collective wisdom of the leadership group to achieve the common purposes of the organisation.



Why 3H holistic management framework?

The 3H framework argues the most effective way to manage New Normal issues by adopting a holistic approach. There are necessary and sufficient conditions to satisfy the holistic management condition. Few organisations can thrive in the New Normal environment if they could only excel in a partial condition of holistic management advocated by the 3H approach. The 3H framework should not be regarded as a cookbook recipe or treated it as an ISO operation template. Rather, it should be conceptualised as an organic new thinking paradigm or mental schema embedded in the minds of managers. At the heart of the 3H framework is the leadership group's ability to alter organisation structure, modify its functions in response to changes in activity, experience, and circumstances. If the 3H framework is in gear, they should be able to spontaneously manage the key domains of the framework and have their people and organisation issues holistically managed.

3H holistic management framework posits organisational performance is a function of the leader's driving force to integrate all Heart (H1), Head (H2) and Hand (H3) domains of the organisation.

The conceptual framework - 3H's algebraic expression

Organisation performance, the dependent variable, is a function of the leader's driving force to integrate among Heart (H^1), Head (H^2) and Hand (H^3) independent variables of that organisation.

$OP = f\,(H^1 \sqcap H^2 \sqcap H^3)$

OP = Organisational Performance

$\sqcap$ = **Intersection** of each H domain, level of synthesis among 3 H domains is hypothesised positively correlated with the organisational performance.

H^1 = Heart domain and its related constructs: people and value related: stewardship, emotional, moral and ethical appeals, leading, motivating and engaging people, build teams abilities, etc.

Key objective: Inculcating workforce with resilience, agility, adaptability, perseverance and innovativeness characteristics.

H^2 = Head domain and its related constructs – strategic, organisation and business model related: vision, pathfinding, logical & strategic appeal, hierarchy of strategy, planning & controlling, organisational design (structure & systems), etc.

Key objective: Managers are capable to analyse root causes of challenges and to identify options of strategic change and to conduct corresponding strategic alignment.

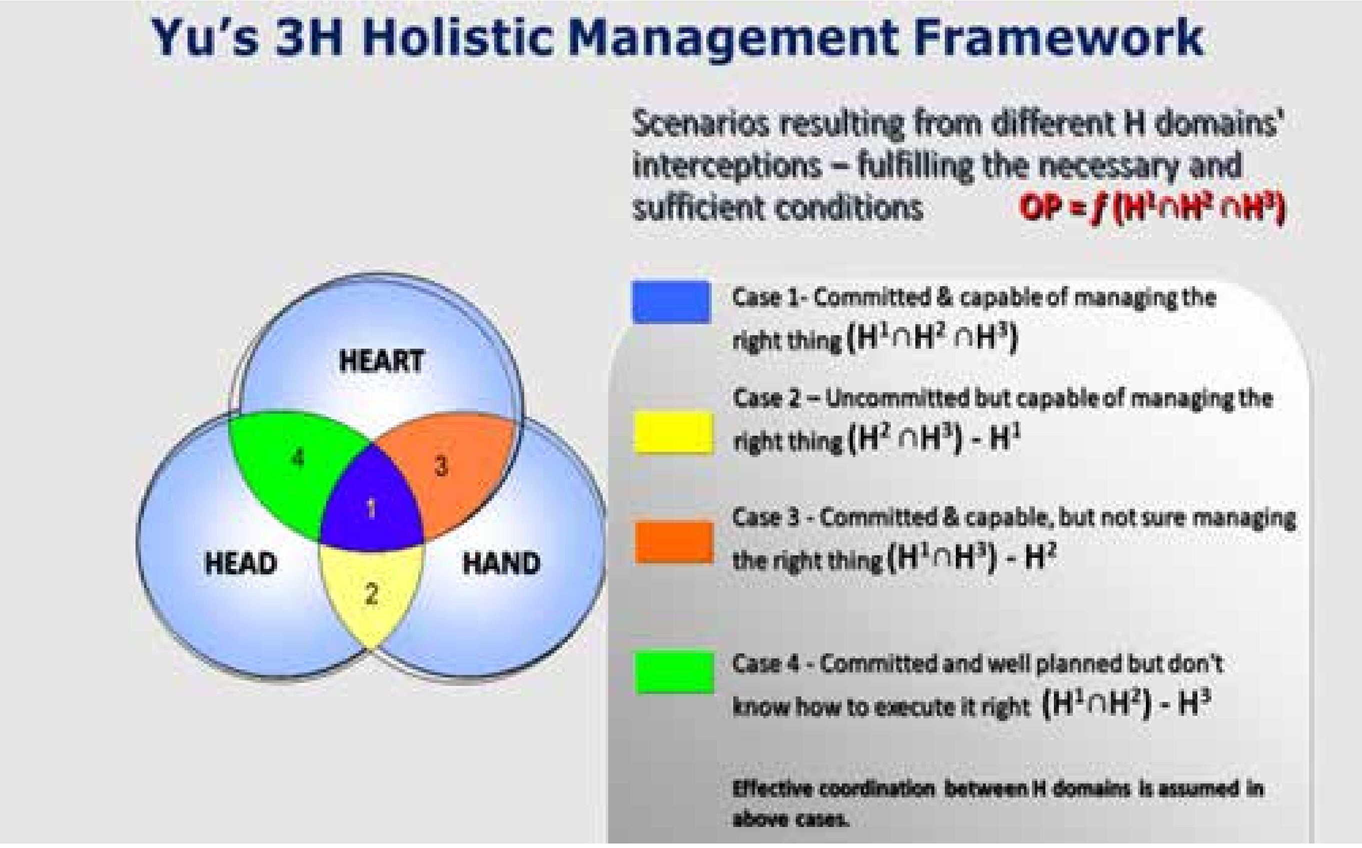
H^3 = Hand domain and its related constructs - task-oriented issues and competence related: supporting, coaching and training to ensure people possessed required operational/functional skills and abilities required to execute programs and activities, etc.

Key objective: Managers are mindful about new competences required for the workforce so that training and other staff development can be scheduled.

Each H's domain may carry different weights of importance to managerial decision makings. Often, H1 carries heavier weight than H2 and H3, whereas H2 carries a relatively heavier weight than H3. Reasons being, even though an organisation's strategy, systems and competence are most advanced, if the leader cannot unify and motivate people to achieve strategic goals, the organisation would wither.

The notion of effectiveness and efficiency refers to both measurable intended outcomes of an organisational or project specific performance driven by the 3H framework.

Effectiveness means strategic goal-driven activities and efficiency means operating organisational or project activities with the least possible resources and costs.



The Synthesis created from the effective coordination among three domains of H1, H2 and H3 shall secure the necessary and sufficient conditions for effective and efficient organisational performance. Case 1 in the Venn diagram above illustrates the ideal conditions that organisations should aim for. Note the other three cases, each has its deficient H domain weakening incumbent organisation's performance. In real life, it is possible to have more than one H domain's deficiency. The level of holistic management hinges on the level of synthesis created by integrating the H1, H2 and H3 domains.

In conclusion, the 3H framework holistic management framework is useful for conducting a post-mortem analysis for a major event or project they had managed. Alternatively, 3H framework is valuable for project planning, especially for assessing the readiness of each H domain before launching the project. While the 3H framework promotes an organic thinking paradigm and holistic approach in managing the unprecedented challenges, it advocates not only strong leading, strategic, competent and all-round management practices, it also promotes altruistic, supportive, non-silo, non-zero-sum and resilient mentalities in managing internal and external relationships of the organisation. We believe practising the 3H holistic management framework would make a better individual, organisation, community and eventually to a better world!

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India

A Groundwork for New Learnings

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All Indian Management Association

Being practical, fair, caring, and empathic are just a few of the values that a leader should uphold when interacting with team members.

In challenging times, organisations considered happiness at work as ‘the holy grail’ of organisational success. But it was not a new concept even back then; the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle stated that happiness is every human’s goal, and it was a matter of living a good, virtuous life. The belief that happy workers are more productive leads to a win-win situation for both individuals and organisations. They demonstrate that workplace happiness is vital for employees, and organisations consider it composed of work engagement, career satisfaction, and subjective wellbeing.

The nature of work and work design is ever-changing. Early management theories considered workers as cogs in the wheels of production. Traditionally, the top-down approach meant that organisations had to put effort into nurturing the workplace environment, thus boosting desirable outcomes. Modern theories view the worker as an organisation’s critical component, i.e., an asset rather than a liability. They hold the more open view that workers have a proactive role in influencing their environments. One such self-driven proactive behaviour is job crafting. It allows an employee to shape and modify a job’s task, relational, and cognitive boundaries.

In recent times, the COVID-19 pandemic has favourably resulted in organisations taking notice of employee well-being. Managers try to understand employee work attitudes and behaviours to retain talent and improve performance. How happiness impacts employees and organisations can be identified as follows: First, there are personal impacts that are directly tied to each individual’s life, such as income, a higher life expectancy and health, increased career self-awareness, no burnout, and a feeling of solidarity. The second is workplace behaviours (i.e., how people behave at work), such as better teamwork, reduced turnover, increased task, and contextual performance. Finally, group of impacts e.g., organisational outcomes.

As a leader in an organisation, there are some principles that a leader should practice when dealing with employees, such as being realistic, fair, considerate, and empathic. According to Chiumento (2006), organisational leadership factors such as cooperation in management, structure and work system, decision-making power, leadership credibility, and employer recognition can also contribute to a stressful employee.

Being practical, fair, caring, and empathic are just a few of the values that a leader in an organisation should uphold when interacting with his/her team members. Organisational leadership variables such as management cooperation, structure and work system, decision-making authority, leadership credibility, and employer recognition can also influence how stressful it is to work as an employee.
Being open and vulnerable can help leaders and their teams remove their masks and reveal their true selves. It also encourages everyone to become more self-aware of their strengths and areas they could adjust, which in turn can lay the groundwork for new learnings by setting goals—but not just any goals.

Disclaimer
The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 10 Volume 62) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

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India

Course Correction

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The leadership journey is a layered, multifaceted one that includes constant sharing of feedback.

"There has to be a willingness to constantly accept critical feedback and rapidly iterate to make things better." – Sam Yagan, American internet entrepreneur. In today's ever-evolving professional landscape, communication becomes the root of collaborations and conflicts. Taking the form of honest feedback, it assures people that the leadership is invested in aligning their purposes with the organisational objectives. Its absence can leave employees without the much-needed guidance that can fuel their inner passion to contribute to the greater good.

However, the formerly unquestioned adage that "any form of feedback surpasses none," has undergone a profound transformation. Only when utilised mindfully can feedback create impact and act as the linchpin that cements a strong bond between leaders and their teams.

Feedback, as it appears, is not a one-size-fits-all solution. It is as diverse in shaping the behaviours and actions of an individual as their individual skills and journeys are.

How does impact feedback outweigh other methods? Leaders are supposed to highlight the areas where employees are lagging behind to accelerate their growth without being authoritative. The solution is to focus on the impact their input will create. Refraining from using a label to criticise or reward your people should be the correct approach.

Although being curious to get a clear idea of what interests someone and what their expectations are is necessary, being interrogative is the wrong path to take.

When leaders show a vision to their employees, it infers consistent support for collective growth. So, if a future negative consequence is used as bait to improve the actions of today, it can prove to be harmful for the overall progress of the organisation.

Impact feedback is neither sugar-coated nor inaccurate. It empowers you to get to the crux of the subconscious and conscious reasons behind not being able to reach your inner, hidden potential. It functions to enlighten and cultivate awareness regarding the overall impact of individual entities on shared progress while sidestepping any attribution of blame.

While being considerate is essential, it is paramount to keep in mind that one cannot dictate how someone feels or responds to feedback.

People perceive situations differently, and one cannot compel others to embrace or agree with your input. Nonetheless, there exist strategies to increase the likelihood of one's feedback being taken favourably rather than dismissed.

As impact feedback revolves around people and abstains from psychoanalysing the situations, it always has room for errors. Such errors are amendable. At the Center for Creative Leadership, we have identified some common mistakes that leaders can steer clear of when providing feedback.

- **Judgments in your dialogue:** It is often recommended to evaluate the action taken rather than holding pre-conceived notions. Presenting feedback using judgemental language tends to provoke a defensive reaction. It may give off the impression that you hold an absolute perspective on what is right or wrong. Hence, it is best to adhere to the information at your disposal.
- **Unclear and exaggerated generalised feedback:** Opt to steer clear of clichés and extensively used expressions. To genuinely motivate someone toward constructive actions, pinpoint their specific accomplishments to provide guidance for their ongoing efforts.
- **Too long or threatening assessment:** Acknowledge the significance of timing; individuals need adequate time to absorb feedback. Additionally, delivering a straightforward message that their employment is at a loss doesn't promote favourable conduct. Rather, it tends to foster bitterness.
- **Inappropriate humour clubbed in conversations:** You might resort to sarcasm as a way to provide feedback when you feel uneasy about giving it directly. However, it's better to refrain from making such remarks and opt for a more constructive approach.
- **Being indifferent:** Incorporate the element of curiosity into the conversation. This directly aligns with the feedback, presenting itself more as an observation than a space for challenging counter-questions.

What is the practical way of delivering feedback?
An actionable form of feedback not only helps yield the desired result but also considers the individual in question. Providing feedback to a confident, long-term employee seeking greater visibility will differ from delivering the same to a new team member navigating their first day at work.

Furthermore, creating a platform for dialogue rather than a one-sided conversation delivering feedback. This approach not only pertains to the surface, areas for enhancement but also acknowledges the individual's efforts, thereby boosting their morale.

An ideal receptive approach is characterised by openness and nonconfrontational outward behaviour, allowing others to contribute their ideas without feeling that their actions are under psychological scrutiny. Along with that, ensuring that judgments are left at bay will help in making more objective decisions.

The leadership journey is not a cakewalk but rather a layered and multifaceted one that includes constant giving and receiving feedback. Once you learn how to approach such situations, you create a working environment that bolsters a more united team. Excellence will then know no bounds, and the organisation will thrive toward a future that's bright and impactful.

"A good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better."
- Jim Rohn, American entrepreneur and writer.

Disclaimer
The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 12 Volume 62) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

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Center For Creative Leadership

Macau

Condition-based Conversation

Brian Tang,
Macau Management Association

Bernie was thinking about opening a small business providing grooming and beauty consultancy services to corporate clients. She went to her good friend Larry, who is a business consultant, for some advice. After she has briefed Larry with the background information, their conversation went like the following:

Larry: *This sounds like a good business idea. Have you got some clients who express interest in your service?*
Bernie: *I haven't got any. Generating interest is one of my first priorities.*
Larry: *Definitely. How about competition? How do you differentiate from your competitors?*
Bernie: *My main selling point is highly tailor-made consultancy service. I am very flexible to accommodate...*
Larry: *Do you think corporate clients really need the tailor-made service? They just want the lowest price possible.*
Bernie: *Really? I do think they want the customized solution.*
Larry: *That's not what I know...*

Let's pause here. This is a typical question-and-answer, a.k.a. Q&A style, conversation in which one party raises a question or doubt, and the other answers or defends. As you can see, the conversation is not very effective. Bernie and Larry were expressing different opinions on the same issue. Without some objective measures, such as some data showing the clients' preferences, the conversation can easily get heated and personal. Moreover, Bernie and Larry won't be able to stay objective and discuss other matters of the business. The conversation is going nowhere. Despite its obvious drawbacks, the Q&A style conversation happens every day and everywhere.

Is there a better way to carry out the conversation that is more objective, less personal, and actually moves towards the problem-solving direction? Yes, there is. It's called Condition-based Conversations.

Let's see how Bernie and Larry's dialogue looks like with Condition-based Conversations.

Larry: *This sounds like a good business idea. How about we examine the conditions that must be true for your business to take off.*
Bernie: *Ok, sure.*
Larry: *Let's start with your value proposition. What conditions must hold true for your business to thrive?*
Bernie: *One condition is that I can provide a highly tailor-made consultancy service, which differentiates me from the competitors.*
Larry: *That's a good one. How confident are you on that condition?*
Bernie: *Very confident, without*

a doubt.
Larry: *Great. Any other conditions?*
Bernie: *On the flip side, the tailor-made service is important to the clients. In other words, the clients must value this service.*
Larry: *What's your confident level on that?*
Bernie: *I am only somewhat confident based on my conversation with some prospects, but I would love to learn more about their needs.*
Larry: *Okay. How would you further test your condition?*
Bernie: *I am going to attend a trade show next week and I will meet some of my corporate prospects there. Maybe I can have a chat with them.*
Larry: *That's a good one. How else can you do?*
Bernie: *I think I can…*

The conversation hasn't ended but I believe you've got the idea. The Condition-based Conversations (CBC) turns the Q&A conversation on its head.

Instead of expressing opinions, both parties discuss what conditions must hold true. After generating a list of conditions, they discuss the confidence levels of each condition, and specify how they might test the conditions.

The steps of Condition-based Conversations go like this:

1. Frame the option to be discussed
2. Generate the conditions that must hold true for the option to be viable
3. Assign a level of confidence to each condition
4. Rank the conditions according to the confidence levels
5. Design and conduct tests

Step One: Frame the option to be discussed

The CBC is option-oriented. Therefore, the first step is to frame the option to be discussed. In Bernie's case, the option is to open a small business of grooming and beauty consultancy services. If Bernie wants to consider opening an education center instead, she will need another CBC that is completely independent from the grooming one.

Once the option is framed, we can go to Step Two.

Step Two: Generate the conditions that must hold true for the option to be viable

There are many ways to structure the generation of conditions, and some simple frameworks can come in handy.

For example, we can use the 3C model (Customers, Competitors, Company) to brainstorm the conditions related to each C. If the option is marketing related, the conventional 4P model (Product, Price, Promotion, Place) can be used. Using a framework is not a must, but it can be a great starting point. The idea is to generate as many as conditions that must hold true as possible.

Once you have got a laundry list of conditions, go through them and eliminate all the nice-to-have conditions. They keyword is “must”. The remaining conditions should all be essential – if one of them doesn’t hold true, the option will not be viable.

Step Three: Assign a level of confidence to each condition

Once we have got all the conditions, we can assign confidence levels to each condition. There’s no one right way to scale the levels. You can do it with simple Low, Medium, High, or a 1-10 points scale. The confidence level is a subjective, judgement call. Hence it is likely that different people on the same team have different confidence levels on the same condition. In that case, go with the lowest level.

Step Four: Rank the conditions according to the confidence levels

This step is relatively easy. Rank all the conditions from the lowest level of confidence to the highest.

Step Five: Design and conduct tests

The last step is to design and conduct tests so that we can examine the validity of each condition. Always start with the condition with the lowest level of confidence. Why? If we test the condition that is least likely to hold true and the result fails, the option is not viable. There’s no need to test any other conditions. If we test the strongest condition instead, it is likely to hold true. We must continue to test other conditions. This step is the most time and resources consuming out of the five steps. To save resources, we should test the weakest condition. If it passes, we then test the second-weakest condition, and so on.

If all conditions pass, congratulations! The option is totally viable and likely to succeed. If some conditions didn’t pass or barely pass, we should revise the option based on the feedback gathered during the testing phase. Once the option has been refined, rinse and repeat the process.

Let’s see another conversation with the Condition-based Conversation. A primary six student Steven wants to make some extra cash for the upcoming summer holiday. He wants to sell custom-print t-shirt with his graduating class photo on it. The target customers are, of course, his classmates. He discusses this idea with his mom.

Steven: *What do you think of this idea, mom?*
Mom: *I am glad you are trying*

new things. Now for your idea to succeed, what conditions must hold true? For example, you are able to find a vendor that produces quality t-shirts at a low cost.
Steven: *That's one condition for sure. Besides, my classmates must be willing to buy it.*
Mom: *Great. What else?*
Steven: *Um… the school must allow me to do so, although I don't think it's a problem.*
Mom: *We will find out if it is okay later. Just write that down for now. What else?*
Steven: *I can't think of any more.*
Mom: *How about the use of photo? Do you think your classmates or their parents have concerns of you printing their photos on t-shirt?*
Steven: *Right, that's a good one mom.*
Mom: *Okay, how many conditions have we got?*
Steven: *We got four conditions.*
Mom: *How confident are you on each condition? Give it a low, medium, or high.*
Steven: *Find a quality and low-cost vendor, high. Classmates are willing to pay, medium. School allows me to sell, high. Use of photo rights, low.*
Mom: *So, the permission to print their photos on t-shirt is the least confident of all.*
Steven: Right.
Mom: *How would you find out if it is true?*
Steven: I can ask each classmate.
Mom: *Sure you can, but you don't know how would their parents react. One thing you can do is to design a photo release form, and ask your classmates' parents to sign. That way you have something black and white.*
Steven: *Good idea mom. Can you help me with that?*
Mom: *Sure I can. How about the willingness to pay? How could you find out if your classmates will buy?*
Steven: *That's easy. I can design the t-shirt on my computer, show them the design. If they pre-order the t-shirt I can give them a discount.*
Mom: *Smart boy! All the best to your first business.*

As you can see, the Condition-based Conversation is explorative, objective, and actually moves the issue forward on the problem-solving route. The idea of CBC stems from the book Playing To Win – How Strategy Really Works by A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin[1]. In the book Lafley and Martin introduced what strategy really is and how to evaluate strategy. The CBC is a simplified version of the “reverse-engineering process” used to evaluate and choose among strategic options. Readers who are interested in this topic are advised to read the book. It's one of the best business books about strategy.

To summarize, the Q&A style conversation often produces less than ideal result because it is subjective and often leads to a win-lose battle. The Condition-based Conversation is a better alternative because of at least three benefits:

1. It is objective

Conditions, by definitions, are neutral. It's something we have doubt and yet to be validated. By framing the issues as conditions rather than opinions, we can keep the conversation in an objective manner. Discussing and debating on a condition feels much less personal than that on opinion. We are much less inclined to defend a condition.

2. It is explorative and actionable

When we brainstorm the conditions that must hold true, we are actually expanding our thoughts and perspectives. This generative and explorative mental exercise helps us get out of our mental comfort zone and start to think objectively. At the same time, the tests we design for the conditions are, by definition, actionable. By conducting those tests, we are testing the actual viability of the idea in consideration. The conversation itself becomes part of the problem-solving process.

3. It generates accountability and buy-in from the team

Imagine you are pitching an idea to your team and you have to win over their skepticism. The Q&A style brings you long, tedious, and heated debate. Even when the decision has been made, most skeptics will remain skeptical, hence taking a hit in team accountability and buy-in.

When the discussion is carried out in CBC style instead, the discussion becomes much more collaborative. All team members will take part in the CBC process. Skeptics will have all the chances they need to express their concerns. If their skepticism can pass the tests, their resistance will vanish. The result is a much stronger accountability and team buy-in on the final decision.

Try to carry about the Condition-based Conversation with your colleagues, friends or family, you may be surprised by the result.

1. Lafley, A.G. Martin, Roger L. (2013) Playing To Win – How Strategy Really Works. Harvard Business Review Press.

Brian Tang,
Corporate Training Consultant

Malaysia

Leadership in Turbulent Times: Steering Towards a Brighter Future

Professor Dr. Yusliza Mohd Yusoff &
Muhammad Hamza Qummar,
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In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world finds itself at a crossroads. Having endured one of its most significant downturns in recent history, the global economy now stands at the precipice of recovery and renewal. Yet, the path forward is fraught with challenges, necessitating a breed of leadership equipped with strategic foresight and an unwavering commitment to humanity's collective well-being.

The essence of effective leadership in such turbulent times transcends mere crisis management. It demands a holistic approach that blends visionary thinking with practical action, empathy with decisiveness, and innovation with tradition. This article explores the dimensions of such leadership, drawing insights from historical precedents and contemporary exigencies to chart a course for sustainable growth and prosperity.

Deepening the Leadership Vision

In this era of profound changes, leadership must evolve to address the immediate challenges and anticipate future hurdles. Today's leaders are called upon to think beyond the immediate crisis, envisioning a future where economies are rebuilt and reimagined. This reimagination requires a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between technological innovation, environmental sustainability, and social equity. Leaders must champion policies and practices that promote a green economy, leveraging technology to create sustainable solutions that address climate change and biodiversity loss while ensuring economic growth.

Navigating the Economic Maelstrom

The economic tumult that the pandemic triggered has underscored the necessity for leaders to adopt a more hands-on approach, moving closer to their teams, accelerating the pace of decision-making, and shouldering heavier workloads. However, these measures, while essential, are insufficient in isolation. True leadership in a bad economy requires balancing proximity without smothering, urgency without chaos, and productivity without sacrificing relationships.

Cultivating Global Collaboration and Multilateralism

The current economic landscape underscores the indispensability of global collaboration and multilateralism. The pandemic has highlighted our interconnectedness and the fact that global challenges require global solutions. Leadership, therefore, must be proactive in building and nurturing international partnerships and alliances. This proactivity involves advocating for a more equitable global governance structure where all nations have a voice in shaping the global agenda. By fostering a spirit of cooperation, leaders can work towards a more inclusive global economy that benefits all.

From Vision to Action: The Leadership Blueprint

The blueprint for leadership in today's economy is multifaceted. It begins with a clear vision and a forward-looking perspective that can inspire collective action towards shared goals. Yet, vision alone is not enough. It must be coupled with eloquence in communication, a spirit of cooperation, courage to make tough decisions, and the political intuition to seize the opportune moment for action.

The Case for Engagement and Multilateralism

The current economic landscape demands renewed emphasis on international cooperation and engagement. The lessons from the past, particularly the aftermath of major conflicts and economic downturns, stress the importance of not retreating into isolationism or unilateralism. Backed by a commitment to global engagement, leadership has historically played a pivotal role in navigating the world through crises and towards periods of growth and stability.

A Call to Action: Fostering a Culture of Innovation and Resilience

Leaders today must foster a culture that prizes innovation, adaptability, and resilience. The development of this culture involves navigating the immediate economic challenges and laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability. It means investing in technologies and practices that drive efficiency, embracing policies that support economic inclusivity, and championing environmental stewardship as a cornerstone of economic recovery.

Embracing a Culture of Innovation and Adaptability

Innovation and adaptability pave the path to economic recovery and sustainability. Leaders must create environments that encourage creative thinking and rapid adaptation to change. This encouragement involves investing in education and training programs that equip the workforce with the skills needed for future jobs and embracing startup culture that encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. All leaders can drive economic growth and resilience by embracing change and encouraging innovation.

Championing Social Equity and Inclusivity

A sustainable recovery from the pandemic necessitates a renewed focus on social equity and inclusivity. Leaders must ensure that economic policies and recovery efforts do not exacerbate existing inequalities but rather work to bridge the gap. This means prioritizing access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities for all, regardless of socio-economic background. Leaders can build more resilient and equitable societies by putting people at the center of economic policies.

Conclusion: Leadership for Forging a Future of Resilience and Prosperity

As the world endeavours to recover from the economic fallout of the pandemic, the demand for leadership that is visionary yet grounded, collaborative yet decisive has never been more acute. The path to a brighter economic future lies in our ability to harness the collective strengths of societies, innovate in the face of adversity, and build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economy. The leadership that will navigate us through these turbulent times and steer us toward a prosperous future recognizes the interconnectedness of our global community and is committed to acting in the service of the common good.

In essence, the leadership required today blends the wisdom of experiences with the present innovations to forge a brighter future for all.
The challenges that the current global scenario poses are unprecedented, yet they also present an opportunity for transformative leadership. Leaders must recognize the critical interdependence of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Leadership must be visionary yet pragmatic, collaborative yet decisive. As the world strives to recover from the economic fallout of the pandemic, a holistic approach to leadership will steer us toward a future of resilience, inclusivity, and sustained prosperity. The journey ahead may be fraught with challenges, but with the right leadership, a brighter, more equitable future is within reach.

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ASIAN ASSOCIATION OF MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS

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.

The current 9 members of AAMO are Australia and New Zealand, Hong Kong, India, Macau, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka.

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