

Personal development, what it takes

By Harban Singh

THE new millennium has seen many new opportunities as well as new challenges in most sectors of business. With increased use of technology and globalisation initiatives, there is no limit to an organisation or individual's success, which previously was confined to mostly the shores of one's nation. Along with such growth, it heralded stiffer competition and more political and economic challenges.

As a result, only the best organisations can survive in this 21st century. Similarly, the competition to succeed depends on the best effort from leaders and individuals that make up an organisation. Malaysia is one of the nations where there is a lot of thrust in this area of human resource development under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

What does it take for an individual leader or manager to succeed and win in the current volatile environment? Below are seven recognised efforts and initiatives to succeed and win:

GOALS. All organisations today have a vision followed by strategic and operational plans. Simply translated,

"In today's rapid changing economic environment, businesses have to maximise every asset, internal and external, that they can leverage."

an individual need goals too that will serve as a roadmap. A winner knows exactly what he wants. Towards this direction, nothing happens until a goal is established whether written or conceptualised. When the goal has been established all the energies, efforts and thinking can be directed towards this poignant aim.

PREPARATION. A good manager knows that to win they have to plan ahead where preparation is the essence. As the saying goes: "Chance always favours a prepared mind". The battle is half won with a concrete plan. Many Malaysians are not aware that one of the reasons for Nicol David's sensational success (similar to the Koreans' sports success) is the work rate seen during training. Nicol trains so hard physically and mentally that her preparations gives her the leading edge over her competitors.

An effective individual will always have the burning desire to achieve and meet or exceed their expectations and this can only be realised by detailed

preparations.

LIFELONG LEARNER. To grow, a leader needs to change in accepting new concepts, competencies and knowledge. He needs to understand his strengths and weaknesses and development needs in order to put himself ahead of the game and capture a bigger slice of the growing business opportunities. Reading and application of current know-how is vital. Networking, linking, reading, attending courses, listening to management tapes are some of the avenues that they will pursue. They have coaches and mentors. A winner will need to review his attitude and remove any "baggage" that he carries. Knowledge is dynamic and changing rapidly. Conceived ideas of the past are no more acceptable. Sustainable productivity is the key.

SACRIFICES. A leader will be willing to make a lot of sacrifices especially in "walking the talk and going after the extra mile" to ensure the processes and mechanism of his

business is in place to compete with the best. For example, for a sales director, this entails taking his weekend leisure time to analyse and review his competitor's progress and "best practices", especially if he has a vital strategic meeting deadline to meet.

SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY. An effective leader always plays internal "psyche games" to reinforce his ambitions and beliefs and to overcome all his barriers whether real or perceived. He practices a winner's mentality and mindset and a self-fulfilling belief. This requires a good self esteem, confidence and a good character. He expects to win under most circumstances or take another alternative option immediately to realise his dreams. There is no value judgment more vital to a person, no factor more decisive in his psychological development and motivation, than the estimate he places on himself". As Sun Tzu preaches "Most battles are won before they are fought".

RELATIONSHIP. Today's business environment requires adequate interpersonal skills and maintaining good win-win relationship with your customers, subordinates, bosses and stakeholders. Being politically savvy,

practicality and a "good presence of mind" to reach out to the masses in good or turbulent times are vital.

This requires a give-and-take attitude and constant contact with industry leaders to ensure there is synergy and value from these relationships. Organisations provide club membership for a purpose and it should be utilised accordingly. Similarly, join one that can add value to you and your family.

INTEGRITY. Integrity is honesty and a firm adherence to a code of ethical and moral values. In simple basic terms, it is doing the right thing when you don't have to. Jack Welch, the former chief executive of General Electric is a strong advocate of this standard and expects it to be of second nature to all GE employees. No wonder GE is among the most solid and valued companies in the Fortune 500 list of companies, much to the envy of their competitors.

As the saying goes: "Integrity leads and lasts".

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