

Self-Development

IS NOT A DISRUPTION BUT AN OPTION

In the words of Jack Ma, 'we cannot just focus on today, but must also look into the future and this is where self-development takes precedence. In today's fast-changing economic environment, businesses have to maximise every asset, internal and external, that they can leverage and manage them wisely.'

Individually, leaders have to capitalise on this opportunity and develop themselves to reap the harvest as envisioned by John C. Maxwell, the management motivational guru. The secret is self-development and giving one a head start for the future.

The new millennium has seen many new opportunities as well as new challenges in most business sectors. With tremendous use of technology and globalisation initiatives, there is no limit to an individual's success, which was previously confined to mostly the shores of one's nation. With such growth, it heralds stiffer competition and more political and economic challenges under the guise of rapid development and globalisation.

As a result, only the best organisations can survive in the 21st century. Similarly, the competition to succeed depends on the efforts of leaders and individuals who make up an organisation. Asia and especially Malaysia is one of the nations where there is a lot of thrust in this area of human resource development and self-development as seen by the surge in the number of business schools and training activities.

What does it take for an individual manager to develop himself/herself to succeed and win in the challenging environment?

Below are several ways to succeed and win:

INTEGRITY

Integrity is uprightness and a firm adherence to a code of ethical and moral values. It is doing the right thing when you don't have to.

This requires dignity and the foundation of principles and doing the right thing, irrespective of the situation. Bill Gates of Microsoft is a strong advocate of this standard and expects it to be of second nature to all Microsoft employees. No wonder Microsoft is among the most revered and valued companies in the Fortune 500 list of companies.

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

DILIGENCE

Winners work hard. They are time conscious and they don't complain as they plod their day knowing that there are daily expectations to meet. Their work is measured by their performance and work rate. Results and finding solutions matter most to them.

GOALS

Individuals need goals that will serve as a road map and compass. A winner knows what he wants. Towards this direction, nothing happens until a goal is established, whether written or conceptualised. When a goal has been established, all the energy, efforts and thinking can be directed towards this aim. This was evident when our AirAsia leader, Tony Fernandez, received international acclaim after he made AirAsia into one

of the most important brands in Asia Pacific. It is happening to Jack Ma too being one of the most sought after persons internationally.

PREPARATION AND GROUNDWORK

A good leader believes that to win they have to plan ahead where preparation is the essence. As the adage goes: "Chance always favours a prepared mind". The battle is half won with a concrete plan. Many Asians are not aware that one of the reasons for Japan's success in soccer is their work rate seen during training. They train hard physically and mentally. Their preparations give them the cutting edge over their competitors. An effective team will always have the burning desire to achieve and meet or exceed their expectations. This can only be realised by meticulous preparations.

LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

To grow, we need to be able to accept new concepts and knowledge. One needs to understand his strengths, weaknesses and development needs to put himself ahead of the game and capture a bigger slice of the growing business opportunities. Reading and the application of current know-how is vital. Analysis, attending courses, seminars and workshops, listening to management tapes, giving presentations are some of the avenues that they will pursue. They have coaches and mentors. Knowledge is dynamic. Conceived ideas of the past are no longer acceptable. Hence, learning and adaptation are "twins."

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

A leader will be willing to make a lot of sacrifices, especially in "walking and going after the extra mile" to ensure the processes, systems and mechanism of his business is in place to compete with the best. For example, Tony Fernandez spends a lot of his time meeting

his airline's users and down line staff for feedback.

This entails taking his weekend leisure time to analyse and review AirAsia's progress from the perspective of his key stakeholders.

Such efforts result in the development of his people to be more competent and relevant especially in addressing service needs.

These tested best management practices which put "business before self", set the tone.

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 practises a winner's mentality and mind set and a self-fulfilling belief. This requires a good self-esteem, confidence, drive and a good character. He expects to win under most circumstances or take another option 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 advocates: "Most battles are won before they are fought."

NETWORKING

Any business environment requires adequate maintaining of a win-win relationship with your customers, subordinates, bosses, peers and stakeholders. Being politically savvy, practicality and having 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 and interacting with industry leaders to ensure there is "synergy and value" from the relationships.

Organisations provide membership for a purpose and it should be used accordingly. Similarly, join one that can add "value" to you and your family.



HARBAN SINGH is an international trainer, consultant and motivator. He can be contacted at harbansingh88@gmail.com.