The quote above highlights the complexities and challenges in leadership. In our lecture on leadership, we discussed about whether leaders are born or made and if leadership traits are innate or acquired. We also discussed several leadership theories. A question popped into my mind during the lesson. What makes a good leader? This is a question that I have been constantly asking myself. I feel that the definition of good leadership varies across people and is highly subjective. Culture plays a part in how good leadership is defined as well. A good leader to one person may not be a good leader to another. Is there then a universal definition for good leadership?
Though good leadership may be subjective, there are a few qualities, such as confidence, commitment and the ability to delegate, which are universal amongst good leaders. Being confident, for example, allows a leader to represent his or her team and speak for them. A lack of confidence negatively impacts on one’s ability to lead and causes a reliance on others for solving leadership problems (Kipnis & Lane, 1962). Confidence also demonstrates to followers that the leader is calm and knows what to do in crises. This is highly helpful as it reassures followers.

The Fiedler contingency model posits that good leadership depends on the match between the leader’s style and the degree to which the situation gives the leader control. Good leader-member relations, high task structure and strong position power, for instance, are more favourable for task-oriented leadership whereas good leader-member relations, low task structure and weak position power calls for relationship-oriented leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Likewise, I feel that a good leader is one who is able to fully understand the quality of his relationship with his followers and his control of the situation at hand. Being task-oriented in a situation that he has low control over, for example, leads to greater power distance and the worsening of leader-member relations.
Furthermore, I feel that a good leader is one who is able to morph himself to meet follower needs and characteristics. Intuition is then important as it allows a leader to sense the level of readiness of followers and the amount of support that they may need. A follower who is relatively less competent and unwilling to follow may require more support and direction from the leader. The Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership model categorises styles of leadership that should be used for different follower readiness levels (Robbins & Judge, 2013). I feel that this is effective as it provides a guide to how to lead different types of followers. However, it is also pertinent to note that in certain professions such as teaching, follower ability is presumably high, which could then limit the use of this model. Not all styles exist within a job as well, which means that this model could be better suited for an across-jobs perspective instead (Fernandez, Vecchio, 1997).

Perhaps the best leader is one who adopts transformational leadership. Transformational leadership entails idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Robbins & Judge, 2013). It encompasses both task-orientation and relationship-orientation. I feel that this balance is essential in the workplace in order to progress and to motivate followers. Transformational leaders are able to communicate a common vision for the team, inspire them and give every follower individual attention. I feel that these help to communicate empathy and strengthen the leader-member relationship, which is key in determining the amount of respect and willingness to follow leaders receive. The importance of ethics also underlies this theory. Perhaps then a good leader is one who is able to strike a balance between task orientation and relationship orientation and is ethical.
In conclusion, I feel that there is no one definition of good leadership. What makes a good leader is subjective and depends on follower styles. Different followers have different preferences on how they want to be led. No single leadership style or model can be applied to every organization and culture and each has its own individual set of limitations as well. Perhaps then what makes a good leader is the ability to sense followers’ individual preferences and adopt different appropriate leadership styles accordingly while keeping in mind the requirements of the task at hand and context.

**References**


For the second blog post, I will be writing about resiliency because I think it is highly relevant to us as individuals and also to organisations as sudden changes in the macro environment or internal operations of the firm can easily result in failures that require them to “bounce back” and be integrated once again into the global economy.

Coincidentally, in another MNO class I am currently taking, we discussed about the Toyota recall crisis which I believe is highly relevant and would like to share with the class. I have also attached the case at the start of this blog post for referencing. Key issues that led to Toyota being sunk into this situation involve its over-confidence and complacent mentality. Post recall crisis, Toyota admitted that it grew too big and too fast and has let standards fall. Not only that, they over stretched their supply chain management and had poor supplier management. However, it is important to note that Toyota was unable to recover fast because of the deficiencies in effective communication. Thus this case will act as a negative example of how poor communications management led to delay in recovery of the firm and also emphasizes on the importance of proper communications as a way to assist in crisis recovery.

The lack of communication led to confusion amongst employees that affected company morale. This also did not sit well with the general public who lost confidence in the company and product quality. Such negativity will sink Toyota further instead of aiding in the company’s recovery. In fact, I believe that the company requires higher transparency and communicate more effectively to their employees and stakeholders not only when crisis appears, but even before the happening of crisis to help build resilience.

Communication should have taken place in three stages:

Stage 1: Pre-crisis
The company should actively communicate company goals to employees to instill faith in company. Current performance of the firm and future possible challenges may also be addressed to allow staff to have a better understanding of the current positioning of the company. The company should also actively look out for potential sources of crisis to avoid such happening in the first place.

Stage 2: In the midst of crisis
When crisis happens, the company should actively
search for the source of problem and at the same time, communicate with staff to be more involved in company decisions. At the same time, the company should inform stakeholders of the crisis and assure them of efficient management of such a crisis. Empathy and emotional support should also be communicated to those affected to show that the company is there for them and will be answerable for the crisis. This should be done as soon as the crisis strikes to prevent speculations and help clear up possible misunderstandings.

Stage 3: Post-crisis
The company should continue to communicate to different stakeholders to demonstrate that the company is working hard to eradicate the root of the problem and is toiling towards preventing future repeats. The sincerity of the company will allow stakeholders to see that the company is open about mistakes and willing to change for the better of the people. The company should also communicate effectively to staff to regain back any lost confidence and bond everyone together to be better equipped for future crisis should it happen. This will also facilitate understanding and acceptance, and allow staff to collectively build common agenda for actions.

However, from the above, we can also see that a purpose driven leader is important to help make the company more resilient because he has to have a clear sense of mission in order to allow the company to communicate efficiently. The leader may also use culture, moral spirit and management support to help support actions in order to improve resilience of employees and improve their overall beings. It is also necessary for the leader to strengthen the psychological capital of employees by injecting a sense of self-efficacy and enhance feelings of hope and optimism that the company will recover from the crisis soon enough. The leader may also try identifying “shock absorbers” such as social support from peers and family or recognition by customers or superiors that will help the staff tide over the tough times and build resiliency in the face of crisis and challenge.

In conclusion, effective communications is the key to building resiliency in a company. It is only when the crisis is addressed in a timely manner can employees and the stakeholders instill confidence in the company and assist in its recovery. Unnecessary speculations are detrimental to the company’s image and is hard to recover once damaged. A purpose driven leader is also crucial to help direct the company and lift it out of
One of the topics of this semester which resonates on an academic and national level, is that of resilience. More often than not, we hear in national publications the need to build a “resilient Singapore”. It was not until this course that I properly understood what are the components that contribute to such a concept.

In this post, I shall seek to provide some examples on how we can enhance the 3 components of normalcy, identity anchors and social capital. This will be done under the umbrella of organizational behavior and on a corporate level.

With regards to normalcy, I believe that normalcy should be observed under a globalized context. Large businesses that have stakeholders across multiple borders should be reframing what normal really is. Normalcy can be easily mistaken for stability with regards to organizations and that would be detrimental to performance. This is especially the case given the 24/7 nature of information transfer on mass media networks. I have found that Samsung’s crisis culture where they operate under the idea of “impending doom” as shown in Gerard J. Tellis’ book, Unrelenting Innovation: How to Create a Culture for Market Dominance. Being in a constant state of awareness of one’s surroundings can help to minimize the impact of a crisis when it actually hits. Though it applies additional strain, being prepared is much better than being caught off-guard. It has worked well for Samsung’s global rise in taking on Apple and we have much to learn from them.

Secondly, with regards to identity anchors, this can be achieved through strong corporate cultures. Companies such as Google and Starbucks have their founding tales as a sort of corporate legend. It helps to create a more cohesive atmosphere for identity building as it provides a rallying point for employees. Having a shared sense of history also provides a sense of belonging for those that are newly joining the
charismatic leadership

Roger Mavity, in his best-seller "Life's a Pitch", described charisma as:

“...a way of being that radiates a particular sense of
excitement and magnetism that occurs apparently regardless of what one says or does. People with charisma seem to fill a room without having to do anything more than just being there.

Charisma is a highly valued characteristic in a leader, especially in the business world. It is such a desired trait that much research has been done to find out how one can increase one’s charisma. Charisma is much sought after because having charisma makes it easier to attract new partners and investors into an organisation, to enforce certain unpopular organisational policies, or simply to get people to listen and agree with you (Spears, 2013). However, recent research has cast doubts on how good charisma really is, as well as shed light on the downsides of charisma.

Numerous studies have shown that charisma isn’t one of the key qualities of many highly effective leaders. In Jim Collin’s book on leadership and organisations, “Good to Great”, he writes:

“…those of you with a strong, charismatic personality, it is worthwhile to consider the idea that charisma can be as much a liability as an asset. Your strength of personality can sow the seeds of problems, when people filter the brutal facts from you. You can overcome the liabilities of having charisma, but it does require conscious attention.”

Furthermore, in a study published by the Sloan Management Review (as cited in Clemmer, 2013), the study concluded that leaders of high performing organisations are often not charismatic, and that these leaders are found to be even less charismatic than the leaders of low performing organisations. This was found to be due to the fact that charismatic leaders possess strong persuasion skills, which helps them to overcome resistance for their potentially wrong course of action, which results in harm to the organisation. On top of that, research by Folkman (as cited in Clemmer, 2013) on the competencies that differentiate the best leaders from the worst revealed that among the sixteen competencies identified, by measuring employee engagement, productivity, customer service, quality, safety, turnover, and profitability, charisma was not one of those competencies.

Besides the weak correlation between charisma and leader effectiveness, there are also downsides to having a charismatic leader lead an organisation, as highlighted in Jim Collins’ article “The Death of a Charismatic Leader”. The main concern was that
should a charismatic leader leave an organisation, given that the company’s identity is closely tied to the charismatic leader, there is great possibility that the organisation would falter. Furthermore, there is really a limit to how much a charismatic leader can grow an organisation based on his charisma alone. There is a limit on the scale, the reach, the number of people a charismatic can influence based on his charisma (Collins, 1997).

In conclusion, while charisma can certainly bring about advantages to a leader, one must be aware of the downsides of charisma in order to effectively leverage on charisma to lead well. It is essentially a balancing act which the leader must not be overly reliant or obsessed with charisma. Charisma may be an entry ticket to a leadership position, but it does not guarantee the effectiveness of a leader. The leader must never stop developing his leadership skills in order to be an effective leader.

References


| Leave a comment

Crafting a Resilient State of Mind

Posted on March 30, 2014 by Lyndsay Bloomfield

Resilience is a concept of underdogs. We read stories of those who triumph and overcome. It sends a message of hope. It is more simply defined as the ability to “bounce back”, but I want to understand just
how we can gain that ability. In class we discussed that it has to do with flexibility, creativity, and optimism. I can’t help but think although all these things may be necessary, the emphasis should remain on optimism.

An article in The Atlantic talked about those who dug for the meaning behind their unfavorable situations by writing positively about it. These people gained strength from their situation. The article calls it “searching for the silver lining”. The Atlantic also harps on the fact that resilience is not completely inherent, but it can be developed. The framing of a situation as a challenge or area to grow changes the reaction of a less resilient person into a resilient one. Resilience isn’t the absence of the negativity it is merely the framing of it.

This brings into question how we go about even the smallest struggles in our life. Is it an opportunity to defeat, or to be defeated? Is it a small step forward or back? I think this idea proves that the outcome is up to you to decide. Will you allow the negative to consume you? Or will you view new struggles with an optimistic mind?

A blog, Humans of New York, that I regularly read truly exhibits this brightness. It is a collection created by a photographer to showcase pictures of everyday New Yorkers and a quote from his encounter. It is an exhaustive assortment, but a strangely uplifting one. From homeless people to business executives or construction workers to 10 year olds, every human has an insight to share.

An old women tells the tale of her dying husband, and how she overcame it with two short sentences. A guy who just got out of jail. A picture of two dogs embracing each other. It is a very simple concept. It takes the life around New York, the good, bad, and ugly, and spins it into a compilation of stories. Regardless of your mood or the mood of the story, the reflection that the storytellers use is almost always optimistic. They are the stories of triumph and change. The stories of the “underdog”. Whether its a big feat or a small feat, you can’t help but connect with the attitudes in this blog. This brings me to my final conclusion.

We all have the capacity to be optimistic. We can all help each other to see the good. We can all reflect on our situations like the people featured in Humans of New York do. We can spin any situation to our favor if we view the world with these fresh eyes. If we
emphasize the positive regardless of how hopeless it may seem. Every human is capable of this, it isn’t a born quality or trait. It is a way of thinking. A way of living. Take it from one of the most recent posts of the Humans of New York blog, “I’m homeless, and I’m an alcoholic. But I have a dream.” “What’s that?” “I wanna go fishing.” (pictured below)

References


Just for fun: Ted Talk

Understanding the Role of Culture in Communication

Posted on March 30, 2014 by Fion Leong

In this process of globalization, one key concern that has bothered many organizations in the world is not only the diversity in workforce, but also the culture differences they have with their business partners. One minute the manager could be having a virtual conference with a business partner from China, another minute, he or she might be on his or her way halfway across the globe to meet the business partner in Germany. Often, the crux of clinching a deal can
In the book, *Organizational Behaviour*, by Robbins & Judge (2013), they proposed a communication process model. The main idea proposed here is that the sender initiates a message by encoding their thought. Then, he or she selects a channel, which is the medium, through which the message travels. The receiver in this model refers to the person(s) to which the message is directed for. The next step would be the receiver decoding the message. However, it is to note that during the transmission of the message, there is something called the noise, which refers to the communication barriers that distort the clarity of the message. These barriers can include perceptual problems and cultural differences. So, after the receiver decodes the message, there is something called the feedback loop, which helps to determine the success of the transferring of the originally intended message. One of the barriers of communication effectiveness is often culture. Culture plays a part when the sender encodes the message and it also plays a role when the receiver tries to decode them. According to Lewis (2005), different cultures also have distinct approaches to communication during meetings. In the article shared by Lubin (2014), he actually proposed the different communication and negotiation model of the different cultures (Appendix 1).
In Lewis’s (2005), ‘When Culture Collides’, he wrote:

“By focusing on the cultural roots of national behaviour, both in society and business, we can foresee and calculate with a surprising degree of accuracy how others will react to our plans for them, and we can make certain assumptions as to how they will approach us. A working knowledge of the basic traits of other cultures (as well as our own) will minimize unpleasant surprises (culture shock), give us insights in advance, and enable us to interact successfully with nationalities with whom we previously had difficulty.”

Here, he highlighted the importance of understanding the cultural roots of behavior in enabling a more successful intercultural communication. In the book, Organizational Behaviour, by Robbins & Judge (2013), the author proposed a cultural guide that outlines 4 rules when communicating with someone from another culture. Firstly, assume differences until similarity is proven. Secondly emphasize description rather than interpretation. In the process of interpretation, we often reference and evaluate what someone is saying or doing with our own culture and background. As such, this can result in miscommunication. By delaying the interpretation until one clearly understands the other party’s culture, it helps to reduce the risk of miscommunication. Thirdly, the authors suggested to practice empathy. Last but not least, treating one’s interpretations as a working hypothesis. This simply means that one can treat his or her interpretation as ‘hypothesis’ that requires further testing.

Above articles have placed emphasis on how one should be inter-culturally aware. However, one has to know that the term ‘aware’ does not only encompass him or her knowing that there is a cultural difference. There are in fact different stage of awareness (Appendix 2) according to Baker (2008). For instance, the ‘basic’ level awareness would mean that one can articulate his or her own cultural perspective and possess the ability to compare cultures are general level.
Appendix 2: Intercultural Awareness Model by Baker (2008)

In conclusion, there is indeed a need for organisations to make sure that their employees are well-equipped with Intercultural Awareness ability. And most importantly, there is a need to inculcate an organisation culture that encourage intercultural awareness.

References:


Building a resilient organization-why and how

Posted on March 30, 2014 by Gao Yang

I felt that resilience is really an interesting topic, but unfortunately we did not have much time to discuss
more details in class. Here, I would like to reflect on some of my understanding on the importance of building organization resilience and how it can be built up.

**Importance of Organizational Resilience**

Organizational resilience is defined as the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions so that the organization can recover from those conditions and become more strengthened and resourceful. Resilience is of vital significance to any organization because of a few reasons. First, it enables an organization to respond to unexpected events quickly, calmly and rationally, without having to engage in an extended period of regressive behaviors. Second, it advances the scientific knowledge of organizational adaptation. Resilience focuses on learning to live with uncertainties and changes, such as willingness to learn from mistakes, and improving organizational flexibility. It helps to build up adaptation capacity. Third, resilience is important in the analysis of adaptation. While traditional loss reduction methods try to reduce possibilities of unwanted events, resilience deals with situations where such events do happen. In other words, loss reduction activities do not help an organization recover in the event of tragedies, thus adapt to such events, but resilience does. Therefore, how adaptive an organization is can be analyzed by looking at how resilient it is. Last but not least, an organization with resiliency objectives can align and support the top management’s strategic goals to ensure it will meet its core objectives regardless of adversity.

Worth mentioning is the fact that risk management is different from resilience. Both important to an organization, risk management is more of a preventive and precautious concept, whereas resilience is more about post-event recovery. However, resilience is not just proactive. Reactively, resilience recognizes the impacts that sudden negative events, or even positive but overwhelming events can have on an individual or an organization, thus allowing them to prepare psychologically, financially or physically in advance (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). The central concern of organizational resilience is the “learning and innovation of organizations required to build adaptive capacity” (Zhang & Liu, 2012). Both risk management and resilience are significant in achieving organizational stability and sustainability.

**How to Build Organizational Resilience**
There are a series of ways in which an organization can build its resilience. The most acknowledged one though, is to invest on top management and get senior managers’ support. Leadership plays an important part in building resilience. On the employee’s level, how resilient employees are happier, more agile, and thus more efficient should be explained to top management. On the organization level, top leaders should attend leadership development courses that specifically address the issue of establishing organizational resilience. Resilient leadership tend to tip the entire organization to the direction of resilience, and acts as a catalyst to drive the employees to cohesively achieve their common goals. Another important way to build organization resilience is to embrace cognitive variety, that is, to have a group of people who have a common goal, but different ideas on how to achieve them. Having various opinions around getting to the final goal is having multiple backup plans. When one does not work in the event of a casualty, there are always other ways to try out. A third way is by deliberately allowing a bit of inefficiency. This might sound strange, as all companies strive to achieve as close to 100% efficiency as possible. Nonetheless, there is a correlation between efficiency and agility. The higher the efficiency, the more likely the organization is to suffer when disaster comes. Toyota has a successful lean production system, but by default it would suffer more than competitors such as General Motors during disasters—indeed the case when the tsunami took place. Of course, it is practically difficult to decide how much efficiency the organization should target, but the tradeoff is inevitable. Last but not least, an organization should set up policies and practices to ensure all levels become more and more resilient. Such policies may include allowing a short afternoon nap for employees to refresh, or a quick work out session, or a walking discussion. Having such a flexible and less stressful working environment will make the employees feel at ease, both psychologically and physically. Once again, top management should do these and lead by example. When subordinates see their leaders placing an importance on resilience building, they will follow.

To conclude, organization resilience is important to any organization. It helps an organization to bounce back to the normal track when an unexpected event takes place, and thus building resilience is crucial. There is more than one way to establish organizational resilience, but the key is for top leaders to realize the importance, set policies and lead by example.
Transformational Leaders: Why are they so valuable?

Posted on March 29, 2014 by Emily Rose

“The role every manager must fill in the workplace is leadership. Managers often make the mistake of assuming because they are managers, they are also leaders and their associates will automatically follow. In reality, position only denotes title, not leadership.” (Transformational Leadership: The Transformation of Managers and Associates, 2013)

Leadership is an interesting thing because many
individuals will have different opinions of who qualifies as a good leader and what characteristics are positive in a leader. There are many different kinds of leadership, and there is a time and a place for all of them. The leader should be able to gage the team and the situation and pick how they should run the group depending on the group dynamic. Leadership means taking responsibility of the group and leading however seems fit. It is all about judging the people and their personalities and what would push them to be passionate about the goals of the group. One form of leadership we discussed in class, transformational leadership, especially caught my attention because it seems to encompass every trait in my personal definition of a leader.

**What exactly is transformational leadership?**

Transformational Leadership Video

The video highlights 4 characteristics that are essential in a transformational leader:

1. **Vision (Inspirational Motivation)** – provide a noble vision to work towards that inspires others

2. **Authenticity (Idealized Attributes and Behaviors/Influence)** – authentic in their commitment to the mission not just personal gain integrity inspires the team to take action

3. **Growth Mindset (Individual Consideration)** – cultivate their teams professional and personal development, invest time and energy knowing their effort will eventually bear fruit, recognize effort and performance

4. **Creativity (Intellectual Stimulation)** – encourage team members to develop ideas, work with flare, and embrace originality, allow measured risk to foster culture of innovation.

After reflecting on the characteristics emphasized in the clip, I found that these characteristics each fell under one of the 4 “I”s of leadership discussed in class. A transformational leader is essentially an individual that posses all of the 4 “I”s of leadership, and they know how to effectively utilize these traits.
Why do I want to work under a transformational leader?

There are many benefits that come to mind when thinking about the value of a transformational leader. Unlike other leaders, transformational leaders allow each team member to realize their true potential and perform beyond their own expectations through individual consideration. I would be pushed in order to better the team and myself. This kind of leader is usually energetic and brightens the mood in the workplace. This is helpful because when you are collaborating with someone who is very passionate about the issues and cares about your opinions and ideas, this would increase my personal engagement in the workplace. I would be much more motivated to share my ideas and collaborate with the group. Due to the fact transformational leaders have visions for the company as a whole, I would feel as if I were working towards something huge. It would be extra exciting because my personal achievements would be helping the company as a whole progress towards a change the group was passionate about. The leader would drive this passion through their inspirational motivation. On top of getting all members excited about the same goal, these leaders are open to suggestions and change. They work hard to make every employee feel valued and confident enough to speak out. In the end, multiple people collaborating to reach an end result is better than just one individual alone. Through intellectual stimulation my creativity would increase as I brainstormed possible additions to the vision that would aid the team as a whole or better the end result. The leader would push me to think outside the box and become an innovator. This would not only help me in the work place, but it could also change the way I think about life in general. I could be pushed to become more open and unique in my thinking process. In addition to them pushing me to become creative, they would also serve as a role model. I strive to be an individual who can collaborate with a team in such
a way where I can motivate others to share my passion about a goal and push them to better themselves. Transformational leaders possess those traits as well as idealized attributes and behaviors and are people who should be admired in my eyes. They possess traits such as honesty, integrity, and humbleness, and are people who deserve my respect. If I didn’t feel they deserved my respect or didn’t have traits I admired, I wouldn’t consider them transformational leaders. In some way shape or form, having a transformational leader in the workplace would give me someone to learn from. They would emphasize areas of improvement and cause change for the better, and they would also foster personal development.


Charisma : Is it truly a trait?

Posted on March 29, 2014 by Khairul Anwar
With the plethora of self-help books on leadership, one aspect that has been laboriously rehashed over again albeit in different iterations is charisma. When taken at its literal meaning, charisma refers to a divinely conferred power [1].

Over the years, there had been a rise in terms of visibility of leaders who exhibit this trait on the global stage. In politics, Barack Obama enthralled America with his vision of an America where endless possibilities can become a reality through his mantra of “Yes, we can”. In technology, Steve Jobs is a visionary maverick given his ability to sell products that people did not previously think they need such as the iPad. Through the high visibility of charismatic leaders in various domains and given the pervasiveness of the Internet and social media, these leaders have attained an almost cult-like status.

Hence, it is with little surprise that in recent years, numerous ordinary people are reading countless tomes of self-help books on charisma, attending seminars or enrolling in courses in an effort to chase this elusive trait and become extraordinary.
However, given all matters that are amorphous and hard to quantify, there has been many confusion on this matter. The most common confusion is whether charisma can be trained or is it a trait? In class, we identified charisma as a trait. This holds true for many classical literature in management which looks at charisma from a trait approach whereby one is determined to possess charisma by exhibiting certain behaviours such as being visionary, energetic, unconventional and exemplary [2].

However, in recent years, numerous studies have shown an increased acceptance of another approach to charisma; the theatrical approach [3][4]. The theatrical approach examines charisma as a behaviour that can be enacted through attributions of charisma in both verbal and non-verbal behaviours. [5]

Hence, what these research suggests is that although charisma has been classically defined as a trait, it has also been identified as an ability that can be trained in ordinary people through the theatrical approach. Although the effectiveness of the theatrical approach has not yet been quantitatively proven, it does bear some credence to the philosophy instilled in self-help books and charisma workshops especially given the deluge of literature examining this approach.

With that in mind, according to an article in the Harvard Business Review, anyone trained in “charismatic leadership tactics” (CLTs) can become more influential, trustworthy and leader-like to their followers through nine verbal and three non-verbal behaviours that can be exhibited [6].

To be a charismatic speaker, it is important to help listeners understand, relate to and remember a
message. A powerful way of achieving this is through using *metaphors*, *similes*, *analogies* and lastly, *stories and anecdotes*. Martin Luther King Jr. was a master of the metaphor. In his iconic speech, “I have a Dream”, he likened the U.S. Constitution to “a promissory note” guaranteeing the unalienable rights of liberty to all people but noted that America had instead given its black citizens “a bad check,” one that had come back marked “insufficient funds.” By attributing the current situation to that which is easily understood by many – receiving a bad check, the message is crystal clear and easy to retain.

Another key verbal CLT is *contrast* as it combine reason and passion by clarifying one’s position by juxtaposing it with the opposite, often to a dramatic effect. An example would be John F. Kennedy’s “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country”. Besides that, using *rhetorical devices* encourages engagement from the audience and ensures that the interaction is a two-way street. *Three-part lists* are another effective persuasion tool because it distils any message into three key takeaways. The reason it is three is because most people can only remember three things which is enough to provide proof of pattern and give an impression of completeness.

The remaining three verbal CLTs are *expressions of moral conviction* which establishes your credibility by revealing the quality of your character to your listeners, *setting high goals* which helps demonstrate one’s passion and lastly due to the high goals set, it is important to *convey confidence that the goals can be achieved*. 
Lastly, the three nonverbal cues—expressions of voice, body, and face—are also key to charisma. Although it does not come naturally to everyone, it represents the most culturally sensitive tactics. In fact, what is perceived as too much passion in certain Asian contexts might be perceived as too muted in a European one. Despite the challenges, it is important to be adept at understanding nonverbal cues so as to truly master the art of charisma.


Even as a student, how often are you feeling engaged in classes? If you were to grade yourself with a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least engaged and 10 being the most engaged, what would your grade be? If you didn’t give yourself a high grade (assuming high grade must be in the range of 8-10), then why is that you are not engaged in classes? No interest in that particular module? No motivation to strive for a high grade and only hope to achieve a pass?

Similarly, in the working society, we would also find many working adults in the same situation as what we, students faced daily and by working adults, I am not referring to fresh graduates who just step into their new phase in life. Most new graduates are enthusiastic and excited about their first job experience that it would be difficult to face any disengagement issues. However, such high levels of enthusiasm will not last long. As time passed, these working adults may start to feel less engaged in their jobs due to various reasons such as heavy workload, demanding requests from superior and no motivation factors to pursue better work performance. The various stages of engagement that the employees would encounter is described in the Table 1 shown below.

Table 1: Description of Employee Engagement Levels

| Level | Description | Employees only care about whether their own personal goals such as balanced worklife are met, whereas companies are only concerned with achieving their company goals such as profits. Despite having different goals, both forces are necessary to work together to achieve them and in order to do that, both sides would need to reach a compromise. In Diagram 1, the 5 employee engagement levels that we have seen from the earlier Table 1 has been incorporated in the X Model, giving us a clearer idea of the intensity of job satisfaction and contribution by each employee in the 5 different stages. |
Diagram 1: The X Model of Employee Engagement

As shown, companies are required to align their goals with employees’ expectations so to achieve the highest level of satisfaction and contribution (represented by Area A). Unfortunately, not many companies and employees are capable of achieving the best outcome and many ended up in a range of being relatively close (represented by Area B) to the furthest away from the best outcome (represented by Area E).

Company goals are pretty much similar within industries whilst definition of employee engagement is very subjective and varies from one person to another in the same department of the same company, therefore it is super difficult to understand and satisfy each and every one’s definition of engagement. Having said that, it does not imply that companies should give up trying to understand each employee’s engagement definition. After all, companies do need employees in order to achieve their goals in the long run. If they do not put in the efforts to understand and work out a compromise with their employees, then the companies will be at the losing end.
solutions to improve or maintain current employee engagement level. In this video, it has also mentioned that employee engagement must be a daily priority for all individuals and top management and I strongly agree with this statement. Employees play a huge role in the operations of a company. What sort of progress would a company achieve with unsatisfied employees or employees that are not contributing or producing positive results? To prevent this, top management has to pay more attention to each and every employee in the company. As for the individuals, it is extremely important to understand your definition of employee engagement level and from there, seek ways to achieve what you feel is important to you. Work would definitely be more enjoyable when we are more engaged and no one would want to dread working when we have to spend an average of 30-40 years working in our entire lifespan!