

<p style="" class="MsoNormal">Kamran Rizvi, Navitus
May, 2014</p><p style="line-height: 125%; background-position: initial initial; background-repeat: initial initial;" mce_style="line-height: 125%; background-position: initial initial; background-repeat: initial initial;"><i></i><i>We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.</i></p><p align="right" style="text-align:right" mce_style="text-align:right">- Sandra Day O'Connor[1]</p><p style="line-height: normal; background-position: initial initial; background-repeat: initial initial;" mce_style="line-height: normal; background-position: initial initial; background-repeat: initial initial;">Most of our problems stem from lack of applied commonsense! The most common example is our failure to delegate and empower. We don't get help from those who are there to help us! </p><p style="line-height: normal; background-position: initial initial; background-repeat: initial initial;" mce_style="line-height: normal; background-position: initial initial; background-repeat: initial initial;">Stephen Covey, a well known self-development and leadership expert once said in an interview, Common sense is not common practice. He was referring to the unhelpful managerial behaviors and practices prevalent in many organizations worldwide. I find this to be the case as well.</p><p class="MsoNormal">A young and dynamic manager, in his early 30s, took charge as head of sales and marketing in a local company at the end of last year. He started by quietly reviewing the working practices and processes in the department, before introducing any changes. He went by the book, silently observing the state of play in the business, without ruffling any feathers.</p><p class="MsoNormal">A few months later, he called a meeting with his team of twelve. Three of them were pretty seasoned and experienced, while the

remaining had been with the company for just over a year. The reason for the large induction of young talent was that the company was anticipating significant growth in its industry, and had therefore gone on a major hiring spree.

The manager adopted an informal style in the meeting to get a handle on the problem of eroding market share due to, what he thought, was the ever-increasing competition in the industry. This company had been a market leader for a decade or so, and its dominance was now threatened. He felt that if this downward trend continued, the company could face bankruptcy in less than five years. After candidly sharing the big picture with the team, he brainstormed with them to identify the root causes of the problem. People opened up to him and were quite forthcoming with ideas. In short, the meeting was a success, as it involved everyone in the identification of the core issues. The manager successfully gained early acceptance by his team, but he still needed to build credibility in their eyes.

A few weeks later, the manager announced a revised plan and strategy for 2007 based on the inputs he had gathered from the meeting and his take on the market dynamics. He emailed this to all his team members and also copied his email to the CEO of the company, concluding with the comment: ***I just hope that my team starts implementing these plans as anticipated.*** Mindful of the company's history of poor execution and the manager's new role as head of sales and marketing, the CEO picked up on this remark.

In his reply, the CEO started by congratulating the manager on taking this timely and bold initiative and then went on to say:

I just hope that my team starts implementing these plans as anticipated merits reflection.

Ask yourself; what gets people to do the things you want them to do, willingly and with enthusiasm? I have found that logic, force and/or reason alone do not work most of the time. Why? There is something deeper in people that we need to find and address! In my humble view, just ***hoping*** is never enough. The essence of superb execution lies in creating a 100% buy-in for all our plans and strategies in people whom you have developed.

Knowing you as I do, I have full confidence that you have what it takes to obtain the best out of your team! The source of this power is within you. Find it and use it!

All the hard work we put in, and the midnight oil we burn, points to what we are not

doing (developing people), in order to have a life free of negative stresses. Wouldn't it be great if we could, one day, sit back and enjoy the fruits of our labor in the form of brilliant performances from our team? Such a day awaits us, provided we do what is needed today.

You know well that I have slipped on this score many a times, and you too, will have your fair share of setbacks. But each failure is a teacher!

Please feel free to check-in with me on any matter, any time!

Sure! Wouldn't it be great if we could, as the CEO says, one day, sit back and enjoy the fruits of our labor in the form of brilliant performances from our team? But how can this ideal picture ever be accomplished?

First we need to realize that alone we accomplish next to nothing. Sandra's quote at the top of this article makes this point beautifully clear.

A desired fruit of the kind the CEO is suggesting in his communication comes from labor, but only if it is intelligent. Consider this thought: Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of non-essentials.

file:///C:/Users/Yasir/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/5PKS4MYG/Enjoy%20the%20ride%20-%20May%2013%202014--.doc#_ftn2

[2] This invites us to consider what should be done, and what ought to be left undone.

Corporate tragedies are often created by managers themselves who fail to consider the ramifications of their short-sightedness and don't delegate enough; and what little they do pass on, is often abdication, and not delegation. Such managers remain excessively busy getting things done!!

They endlessly burn the proverbial midnight oil and their work-life balance remains completely up the creek! This causes immense stress not only on the perpetrator of this bad habit, but on everyone working with such a person. Exhaustion leads to irritations. Angry outbursts ensue, poisoning the ethos of the business.

Such managers are forever tactical and operational in their approach, mindless of the consequences of their strategic blindness and their resultant erratic behavior. They have no time left for ...weaving of individual threads from one to another.

A classical manager's framework comprises three dimensions, 1) Strategic Steering; 2) Developing people and Internal/external relations; and 3) Operations. In my observations of 500 managers from twenty companies in Pakistan over a 5 year period, I found that majority of them spent close to 90% of their time in day-to-day operations, virtually fire-fighting each day surviving from one crisis to the next. Why? To my mind it's a combination of unhelpful perceptions and bad habits.

Changing a house is easy. Changing a job is also quite easy. Changing a relationship is relatively easy. But changing habits and perceptions is the hardest of all. This is one reason why organizational growth is stunted, particularly in local industries.

We have learned from our childhood to see things as we do. What we see may not be true, but it has become a fact for us due to our habitual way of interpreting reality. Our beliefs guide our perception of reality. The most common belief prevalent in the corporate sector is that jobs are hard to find; career choices are limited. Therefore, many managers think it is wiser to cling to the job they have, instead of genuinely coaching someone to succeed them. As a consequence of such a belief, a number of managers remain insecure, and tend to keep information to them to protect their turf. They fear delegating as it may result in blunders by subordinates, for which they will personally be held accountable.

Let's look at another example of how our faulty perception blinds us to the obvious. I recently asked a senior manager in a multinational company, how many hours he had in a day, and he said, "You see! This is the problem!! I only have 24 hrs in a day, and I am expected to do 40 hours of work. Look - I only

class="MsoFootnoteReference">[2] Lin Yutang, (October 10, 1895 ♦ March 26, 1976) was a Chinese writer and inventor whose original works and translations of classic Chinese texts became very popular in the West. Source:

www.WisdomQuotes.com</p> </div> </div><div><div id="ftn5">

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<i style="" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">No matter how big your organization gets, continue to empower your people at every level to deliver. Only this way will size lead to advantage.</i><i style="" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal"> </i> <p class="MsoNormal" style="">It is always useful to explore the history of any company to understand how they got to being what they are today. Corporate success usually follows some combination of visionary entrepreneurship and luck. When companies acquire early successes and achieve a dominant position in some market or markets they become profitable and usually follow a steep growth trajectory in their early years. </p> <p class="MsoNormal" style=""></p> <p class="MsoNormal" style="">With the passage of time, however, pressures on managers come mostly from inside the firm. Building and staffing a bureaucracy that can cope with growth is the biggest challenge. External constituencies are neglected. The firm needs, hires, and promotes

managers, not leaders, to cope with the growing bureaucracy. Top managers allow these people, not leaders, to become executives. Sometimes top management actively prevents leaders from becoming senior executives. Managers begin to believe that they are the best and that idiosyncratic traditions are superior. They tend to become increasingly arrogant and aloof. The problem is compounded when top management does nothing to stop this trend and often ends up exacerbating it.

A strong, insular and conceited culture develops. Managers fail to acknowledge the value of customers and other key stakeholders. They behave in an inward-looking, sometimes political fashion and fail to acknowledge the value of leadership and the talent available at all levels that can provide it. They tend to stifle initiative and innovation. They behave in centralized and authoritative ways.

Consequently, as organizations grow, whether in terms of sales, number of employees, range of products and services, market share, or whatever, they start to lose the advantage they once had. According to John Naisbitt in the book *Rethinking the Future* it is the small companies who are creating the global economy, not the Fortune 500. And these days a small company can be as small as one person. In his book, *Megatrends 2000* he gave the example of his neighbors Linde and Lito who have a publishing company called Western Eye Press. He continues, "It's just two people and they publish wonderful photographic and guide books. They create them on Macintosh computers in their basement in Telluride. They print out the camera-ready pages on their own high resolution laser printer. Then they FedExed these pages to Seoul, South Korea, and the printer there manufactures their books and ships them to distributors all over the world. Western Eye Press is a key player in the global economy and its just two people on this little mountain perch in Colorado."

Large corporations and global conglomerates, if not careful, end up becoming highly bureaucratic, over-managed, rule-driven and inflexible by virtue of their size. In this day and age of cyberspace and nanotechnology, fetish with size of a business can become an impediment. This is particularly true for organizations that have grown significantly in scale in terms of revenues and market share. Organizations like Citibank have lost touch with their core constituents. It may be a major player with a strong brand image, but customers interacting with its frontline employees are often disappointed by their state of helplessness in resolving routine problems. This could be on account of slavish adherence to archaic procedures. Often, individual contributors in big companies don't take the initiative needed to listen and understand customer requirements with the intent to ultimately delighting them. There is a lot to be said for systems and processes, but if they are not customer oriented and responsive, the game is as good as lost.

Quality can now be replicated anywhere in the world. China is leading the way in this respect. With the falling of trade barriers and dropping of quotas, the Chinese have taken their global market share in textiles from 16% to over 50% in less than a decade. In recent years, the Pakistan market has been flooded with Chinese products (mostly electronic, light engineering) that are low priced

and in much demand.

We no longer live in a world of big mainframes. We live in a world where the real power is large networks ♦ a lot of individuals connected together ♦ Facebook & Twitter are pointing the way. A network does not have any headquarters. Chinese excel in this field and have spread their global business through this means. Naisbitt cites Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) as a great example of a huge company that thrives and grows through networking. He quotes Percy Barnevik (Former CEO at ABB) as having said, ♦We grow all the time, but we also shrink all the time.♦ As the network gets larger, the nodes get smaller.

So, no matter how big your company gets, continue to excel by empowering your people at every level to deliver. Building agility and responsiveness is the key.