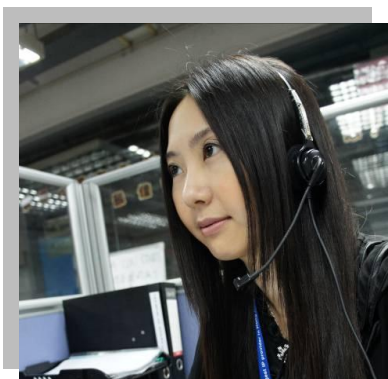




Kiana & Mingo in Outward Bound

*Study without reflection is a waste of time;
Reflection without study is dangerous [Old Chinese Proverb]*

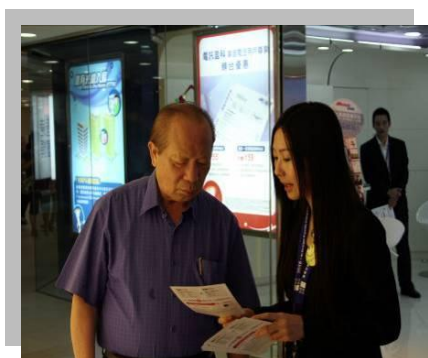
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Answering Enquiries in Call Centre



MC in Talent Meeting



Serving our Customers



Promoting Broadband Service



The First 5 Months of Kiana & Mingo
CXOs of the Future – Vintage 11

May – Sep 2011

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A. Executive Summary

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

-- Mark Twain

With well over a decade of tradition, this years' "CXO of the Future" Management Trainee Program received 1,153 applications from 153 universities around the World. Short-listed applicants were then put through an exhaustive 2-month selection process, climaxing with a 36-hour Outward Bound Live-in Program, accompanied by our current generation CXOs (Chairman, CEO, CFO, CTO etc), where candidates were challenged with corporate simulation scenarios under extreme physical and mental conditions. We finally chose two elites, Kiana & Mingo, to join our 10-year Big Hairy Audacious Goal to become the largest IP service provider in Hong Kong by 2016.

To nurture our future CXOs, we push them on an accelerated learning curve via trial and error and encouragement for making smart mistakes. We put Mingo and Kiana through a rigorous 18-book over 18-month reading program that gives them the "theoretical management" knowledge to test again real world challenges. In addition, we deliberately have our MTs work, not just learn, in cross-department projects and attachments that combine junior talents, middle managers and senior directors, so they can gain first-hand experience of the dynamic telecommunication industry. What's more, they are exposed to wide range internal and external situations with our current CXO level executives which most normal fresh graduates will not have access to. Kiana and Mingo are being groomed to act at the CXO level.

We do not imitate what other companies do; rather we groom our future CXOs to think out of the box and to do what others dare not to do. In short, we are nurturing an upgrade to our current generation CXOs. Our aim is that Kiana and Mingo will be able to learn in half the time of the 20-25 years that our current CXOs took to achieve their positions today so that by the time they run our company, they will be far better leaders.

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Proud to be Pride – Kiana Shek

How many companies would spend over 50% of expenditure on Talents? This obviously shows CTI's commitment as a "People Company"! Our founder, Ricky, defines "success" as being sustainable, which is an initiative to build the greatest team to eventually achieve "built to last". Friends, ex-colleagues, mentors whoever I met, I am just too eager to share my work life. Trying not to be overly pride, I am genuinely proud of paving my career path via **"CXO of the Future"**.

Our current CXOs do not hire just anyone, only the right successor whom they deem worth investing generously in via dedicated mentoring and condensed-knowledge transfer. My learning ranges from company-wide exposure to executive level interactions. I had hands-on experience of telesales delivering outstanding results, technician installing at Discovery Bay, as well as CPA networking events and HKMA advanced trainings. How could I not take great pride in all these? CTI has taken me on a journey from good to great. Along this journey, I am given every encouragement to build the five attributes as a Future CXO:

Ambitious & Bold – "Why not?"

CTI has made monumental progress these years, and are on track to attain the BHAG vision with an unwavering resolve to do what must be done. It all starts from the ambition of Ricky, who is arrogant enough to challenge the "Monopolies". This is also accredited to our CEO, William, a bold decision-maker implementing costly strategic plans efficiently without tedious research. Those made me fully aware of the power of guts.

Creative & Determined – Walk the talk

Given opportunities to learn from successes of Marketing Genius Steve Jobs and mistakes of Movie Giant Disney, I am repeatedly reminded to keep learning so as to keep creating. Working fresh, ideas are blasting out but meaningless without execution. As coached by our action-oriented leaders, I determined to turn thoughtful creativities into feasible business proposals.

Engaged – WOW effects

"What can we do differently?" our CFO, NiQ, always quests. He is a role model adapting out-of-the-box mindset to engage investors by sending kids' books, to engage EMBA-mates and business partners by book sharing, and to engage Talents by exclusive concerts. This strong belief has helped me to understand that as a developing CXO, it is absolutely necessary to build my networks both internally and externally by impressing the others.

Forward

CTI is truly a life-long source of energy and passions where I have grown exponentially in my past 5 months and built our unique DNA – **Dare to Dream, Dare to Do**. The above learning ultimately translates into my courage to pursue a challenging and fun career life. Going forward, I will relentlessly take on new challenges and voluntary myself with resolve, positive attitude. When CTI continues on the best path to greatness, I am continuing with my first-ever fitness training for half- marathon...

Kiana Shek

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My CXO Journey – Mingo Tsang

When I was a University student, efficiency was not explicitly emphasized: All the requirements would be stipulated in the syllabus in the beginning of the class.

You were as such given more than enough time to plan, discuss and complete different projects.

Yet, when I have come to the real business world, especially in the Telecom market, I realized that my mindset has to be changed. I must be highly efficient, extremely quick and well prepared to change, i.e. what we are doing right now is often inappropriate tomorrow in this dynamic market; thus, only when our Talents can get best adapted to the market changes and work efficiently could the company grow fast. In this regard, being a Management Trainee, what I learn most here is how we can be ultra-efficient and action-oriented:

- When the incumbent suddenly launched a "6 months free" campaign with massive TV advertisements, our company counterattacked by having a fabulous "triple-play" offer within merely 3 days.

- When a shortfall of our call centre was unveiled during a Sales & Marketing meeting, which required an IT solution, our CEO immediately called the related IT manager to come and made a \$1.5m decision within 5 minutes

- No colleagues in our company would deny that our CEO & CFO should be awarded "The quickest email replier"

- I promised myself that I would try my best not to leave duties, which I could finish today, to another day

All these experiences and observations could really help refine me to be a future CXO with great execution power and quick decision-making ability; however, what I mentioned above is just the tip of the iceberg, so I would like to invite you to read all the coming reflections and enjoy my CXO journey with me!

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B. Reflection by Kiana Shek

Book and Video Reflections

01. Winning – Jack Welch

May 2011

The reason why I chose to begin with Winning is because of our vision statement. The book quoted tones of examples and theories to coach the reader on how to succeed in the competitive business world. I am pretty sure that all our MC members read the book and the below explains why.

As a Company...

There is always a belief that, hierarchies would increase with companies' growth, so would bureaucracies. These awful layers lead to toxic vices. Some of the examples are, putting spins on new initiatives, hindering innovative thoughts, adding complexity and limiting efficiency. The question is, are these really inexorable? Certainly not! Company would not and could not win whilst everyone is barely responding to rank or no one is taking accountability. The critical success factor is to assemble a flat organization chart with blindingly clear reporting relationships in order to eliminate unnecessary waste of resources. After all, I believe all CTI Talents have consensus that, our structure is authentically flattened and straightened out.

GE adopted 20-70-10 to differentiate employees by a clear-cut performance system, with defined expectations and goals. Positively thinking, this creates a healthy competition internally as long as consistent appraisals are done with candid reviews. I could imagine the drawbacks from over-protection of those who do not perform. It somehow hurts the underperformer themselves because when time passes by, it might have been too late to improve or they may find it impossible to start it all over again. It is undoubtedly painful to let go especially when firing the comparatively poor ones is actually a complex and delicate decision. Nonetheless, such differentiation in turn rewards those who deserve it and motivates the rest to strive for excellence. We always want to work with the talented, don't we?

As a Leader...

Political heads are consensus builders by nature because they can win a popularity contest. But they are not true leaders who have the courage to make unpopular decisions and gut

calls. When you are initiating a drastic change but exposed to a situation with limited support, will you hold back or listen to your instinct? Genuine leaders will definitely go ahead by changing the external environment into a more favorable one. What's more, winning companies must be courageous enough to inspire refreshing minds and embrace learning through iterative experience. Leaders will then be capable of breaking the existing rules and generating new ones. By the same token, when the vast majority was adopting a pessimistic view on CTI years ago, our leaders did all those breakthroughs to win the applause around the world.

“Do not change for change, but change for a reason,” said by my mentor. Given the fact that no one has every bit of information at the outset of change initiative, the most significant element is a clearly stated purpose. Like GM, IBM and Xerox, we sometimes face emerging competitive threats which may or may not be real. Yet, responds are required. However, communication about change does become a lot more challenging when a company gets larger, especially when we may get confused by overwhelming noises around. This pervasive skepticism is all the more reason that the leader must stay far away from empty slogan and instead stick to a solid, persuasive logic. Talents will be able to understand that change is a way of life. With true believers and real change agents here, the leader ought to communicate a sound rationale to ensure the change to be a relatively orderly process.

As a Talent...

Integrity, Intelligence, Maturity is basic. Traits of talents can obviously be more than elements of energy, energizing, edge, execute and passion. Beginning from the hiring process, there always is a two-way communication. The common values and cultural fit are the critical attributes for a perfect match. To invite the right players on the field, companies are looking for those who have authenticity. Meanwhile, the realness of the employer is of the same significance. We should never pretend to be someone else as it is impossible to do something we do not truly enjoy. “It is not that that is bad of itself, it is bad if that's not what you really want to do,” said Steve Jobs. Thus, we are stimulated to accomplish what we want to accomplish in our lifetime or even make a dent in the universe. This is why we should be passionate towards dreams.

To achieve a feat, we have to let go the “me-too” attitude in an attempt to bring up extraordinary ideas or proposals. Everyone wants to be heard, as much as being respected. Everyone wants to practice candor, as well as speaking out. How often can we express to our bosses though? “Because we feel anonymous here,” a junior GE staff said. Many talents may be too introvert or lack the guts to innovate because they do not want to risk leaving a trail of perceived failures and being belittled by their peers. For CTI, we have CTI forum and

Roundtable meetings where any positive or negative thoughts and opinions can be exchanged with frankness. Bosses never know every single piece of information so sharing and exchanging ideas will be extremely vital for business growth.

As for me...

The business world is so dynamic that it is a must to seize every single opportunity to win in the marketplace. First and foremost we need a big aha which has to be a smart and realistic way to gain sustainable competitive advantage. This is similar to what we are encouraged to initiate here, a “WOW” effect in the industry and a change in the rules of the game.

On the other hand, leaders are both born and made. To be the best leader, being able to see around corners is a determinant DNA. Only with this can one develop a sixth sense for market changes as well as moves by incumbents in brutally competitive environments, and be able to expect the unexpected, imagine the unimaginable. Looking forward to my growth here starting as a seed, I believe that the greatest potential is yet to be discovered.

02. Execution – Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan

Jun 2011

This book is a succinct summary of all that is wrong in many companies. Bossidy and Charan analyzed many of the most dysfunctional behaviors seen in large corporations and laid out some steps to address them. While many of their stories were taken from Bossidy's second tenure as CEO of Honeywell and focused on senior management and execution failures, to me as an avid reader, their suggestions and guidelines worked just as well for all levels of management.

"What do executives do?" is indeed a good question. "How to do it better?" lies the greater. Before this book report progresses further, I would like to cast my doubts on Ram Charan's conviction on execution being the foundation of building a house. I prefer to refine it into "Execution is the feeding of a baby", and a long but worthwhile process indeed. Without it, a new-born could hardly grow, and it is a vital catalyst for overall health. Not only is it the critical success factor for businesses, it can only be done with right resources and right people crafting worthwhile risk-taking strategies. It is of immense importance that leaders of the organization being deeply engaged in company's strategy, goals and culture. Meanwhile, they should never neglect the execution process which, with proper management, doubles the value of all learning and preaching.

Conceptual thinking in mind

Execution is not just tactics—It is a discipline and a system. We have to build it into our strategy, goal, and corporate culture. In today's business world, we hear far too often that "The environment is tough right now"; or "Our strategy will take time to produce results." But the world is always tough, and success is no longer measured over years. Why don't we interpret problems into challenges and take them as opportunities instead of threats? Most companies evaluate the jobs people can do today instead of focusing on whether individuals can handle the responsibilities of tomorrow. Yet, long term vision is critical because a company can win or lose serious market share before even it realizes what has hit it. That's exactly the case of our incumbent, who looked down on us.

Bossidy and Charan stipulated that the people process is the most important, for people create strategy and translate strategy into operations. If leaders model the right behavior, create a culture that rewards execution, and have a consistent system for getting the right people in the right jobs, the foundation is in place. All these have cultivated the fast-track path for operating and managing the people, strategy, and operations processes effectively.

Especially in our industry, the backend tasks are not mundane because operation flow is critical, every position of the line bear high responsibility. For example, our 24-hour monitoring on network efficiency directly affect our guarantee to customers.

Operational Execution in reality

Majority people regard execution as detail work that's beneath the dignity of a business leader. That's absolutely wrong. To the contrary, it's a leader's most important job, their major responsibility. Amid my understanding, there are three critical points to note. These points are built on some essential behaviors of leadership, which our leaders regularly practice.

1. Integral to strategy, via prosecuting the three core processes of people, strategy, and operations with rigor, intensity, and depth.
2. Leaders get things done by taking responsibility and taking charge of running the three core processes. Perhaps this is how our districts work effectively with high accountability.
3. Execution must be a core element of the organization's culture, embedded in the reward systems and in the norms of behavior. It is then vital for us to enhance morale and embrace our corporate beliefs for driving this social software.

Though the judgment, experiences, and capabilities of people make the difference between success and failure, many leaders do not pay enough attention to the quality of this resource – the one thing under their control. Instead they pay more attention to budgeting, strategic planning, and financial monitoring, when they need to commit as much as 40 percent of their time and emotional energy to selecting, appraising and developing talent. I will never forget the sharing from Tencent CEO, “Replication is an easy job, technology is easy to duplicate but not for human asset.” After my observation of CPE, I can tell how valuable their professionalism is. Incumbents may be faster in building infrastructure, however, there is no short-cut in developing their own people.

What do we do?

What I was first amazed by CTI is the long-services of the leaders. With undoubted loyalty to the company, they

- know telecom very well
- have acquired a lot of industry knowledge, hands-on experience, and company wisdom which they are able to pass on to the next generation of leaders
- directly influence the behavior of the organization that deliver results
- care much about selecting and evaluating the right people

Most organizations, ranging from small firms to big corporations, fall because there is a gap between promises and outcomes. The underlying problem is lack of accountability to

implement the plan. Benchmarking the incumbents in telecom industry, I would arrogantly say that we are the closest to the situation and generate the fastest response to market changes. Opportunities are for the prepared ones. Strategies designed with accurate goal should include road maps instead of rigid paths enshrined in fat planning schedules. Hence, responses to unexpected outbreaks can be more penetrating.

With my experience in CRA, I am so proud to say that the managers are actively engaged in the operation process. Lots of business leaders spent vast amounts of time learning and disseminating the latest management techniques. But they failed to understand and practice execution. Such leaders are building houses without foundations; or in my view, not properly feeding the new born baby. Comparatively, delegation and hands-on execution are well-balanced according to my observations.

How to do it better?

People think of execution as the tactical side of business. That's the first big mistake. Tactics are central to execution, but execution is not tactics. Execution is fundamental to shaping strategy. Leading the whole organization by deeply and passionately engaging in the business as well as being honest about realities would be the key to success. Nowadays, the customers are becoming more well-educated and stressing on credibility and privacy. Therefore, what we need is to proactively take up responsibility and cooperatively implement the plan on an agreed schedule to fulfill promises.

The critical point is that usually the Boards, CEOs, and senior executives place too much emphasis on education and intellectual qualities and neglect to determine how good a person is at getting things done. These two months I frequently heard of the phrase, "Run the Talk", which is like a motto of our management. It implies that we are not merely walking the talk but executing strategies promptly. Even our MC members are spending time actively participate into reviewing the plans and implementing for expected outcomes as well as gaining a better overview. This is what we should keep up.

After all, the authors did not explain clearly how to achieve the satisfying results presented. I finished it with some doubts and concerns though having several ideas. It actually recalled the question asked by NiQ in my group presentation interview, "What did you do differently?" Likewise, while Execution has guided me to the right direction, and stimulate my thinking to trigger discussions regarding the brainstormed ideas, I would explore what to do differently for sustainable differentiation.

03. Pour your heart into it – Howard Schultz

Jul 2011

Before I turned the pages of this book, I was so sure that this is another management book with a “step-by-step” approach on how Howard Schultz built a US\$1 billion asset company for young entrepreneurs. Was my assumption proven wrong when I started reading! This book was indeed dedicated to the development of any young executive in a world class organization, but not just on execution of business strategies, in fact quite little of that were mentioned.

A Humble Beginning Does Not Limit Success...

Howard Schultz started from a humble origin. Unlike others who might have developed some pessimism or introverted persona because of this, he actually began his career with a certain degree of anxiety, but he was not apprehensive of the hurdles and obstacles that came his way. One of my largest learning from him is exactly this self-evolution, which essentially made him the leader that he is today. Foreseeing the challenges ahead, I have to be determined enough and I believe that optimism grows when I tackle them one by one.

If something captures one’s imagination, provided that the person is persistent enough, it would aspire and capture others as well. With this strong belief, I started to think of way we influence each other, formally and informally. Opportunity awaits nobody; it’s for the prepared ones. When an opportunity arose that Howard might be able to purchase Starbucks he again jumped at it. His passion was the final success factor. Of all the initial investors that backed him, they all came back with one common comment – we invested in you because we believe in you. Having experienced the corporate day, I personally think the most critical element triggering their investment would be the management. As good investors never make it without meeting the key person, trust has to be built over time.

Common Success Factors

The following extract from the book struck me with a great deal of awe because I can strongly identify how Starbucks and CTI became so successful.

“When you’re starting a business, whatever the size, it’s critically important to recognize that things are going to take longer and cost more money than you expect. If you recruit experienced executives, build manufacturing facilities far beyond your current needs, and formulate a clear strategy for managing through the lean years, you’ll be ready as the company shifts into ever higher gears.”

Without a shred of doubt, I sense a strong resemblance in the approach of both Starbucks and CTI. This further confirms my personal conviction in the future success of our company. How and why our staff is engaged in a common vision and act accordingly with our missions. Dedicated encouragement in CTI's "change" culture shows that our bosses are genuinely supportive to all levels of talents having enlightening ideas, WIT is a good example that I came across.

People, People, People...

Starbucks view treating employees benevolently as a powerful energizer that can grow the enterprise into something far greater than one leader could envision. As far as I feel, CTI is also a "people" company, as our seniors believe that if engaging talents to the CTI can cause them POUR THEIR HEART INTO MAKING IT BETTER.

Another thing that Howard Schultz did particularly well, and struck me with a great deal of inspiration, was the "self-worth" principle. He once worked in a role, where he was supremely successful, yet he could not identify with. No matter how much money he was making, he didn't feel he was contributing at his best. The solution was simple – he was selling coffee which he liked and identified with. It was simply matching his self-worth with company's products, be courageous in telling his superiors, and once there, he did everything he could to contribute tremendous values.

Engaging the team...

We always mention about Talent Engagement, so how? On the top of all, the key is heart. If everyone pours their heart into their work, or into any worthy enterprise, they can achieve dreams others may think impossible. Besides, we have to bear in mind that a company can grow big without losing the passion and personality that built it, but only if it's driven not by profits but by values and by people who hold the same belief and conduct themselves into it.

Howard said, "If you treat your employees as interchangeable cogs in a wheel, they will view you with the same affection. But they are not cogs. Every one of them is an individual who needs both a sense of self-worth and the financial means to provide for personal and family needs." If we ever want to flourish and win every customer's hearts, we have to first enhance the passionate devotion of talents and the aim is to engage them further so that our talents never view work as just another job. In business, that passion comes from ownership, trust, and loyalty.

Meaningful mission statements have teeth...

To further solidify the company's vision to be the best in the world, Howard took his team of executives on an off-site workshop to come up with mission statements for Starbucks, "PUTS PEOPLE FIRST AND PROFIT LAST". That works but in another way around, our vision statement was written by Chairman directly. It can even articulate a more powerful message of purpose and translate that into a set of guidelines to gauge the appropriateness of each decision made, at all levels of the company. Our leaders made it abundantly clear that it was not intended to be a trophy to decorate office walls, but an organic body of beliefs, not a list of aspirations but a foundation of guiding principles held in common. Over the years, everyone at CTI is making sure that none of our vision and mission is ever undermined,

Corporate or Entrepreneurial?

Howard once worried that they may become a large corporation and lose their original entrepreneurial approach. Then he was comforted when the entire company conducting their business under these conditions which in my humble opinion, are also applicable to CTI.

1. *Romancing the bean*

They have maintained the quality of the beans over the years and they proudly share these stories with all customers. For us, each talent should also romance our world-class products and heartfelt services. It is essential to be confident enough to introduce these to our shareholders, while NiQ is doing so towards investors.

2. *Romancing the customer*

"We're not in the coffee business serving people. We're in the people business serving coffee". From our INC internal contest, I learnt that account managers are consultants for corporate clients. Extending to our frontline talents, they are in the people business to address customers' concerns, solve their difficulties and upgrade their life-quality by serving our products. When we can conduct ourselves under that principle like Starbucks, entrusting with our 2016 BHAG mission, we must be able to pass that passion on to each customer we get in touch with.

3. *Romancing all the senses in the store experience*

Starbucks does particularly well to make sure that every store has been carefully designed so that everything the customers see, touch, hear, smell or taste are enhanced. To us, there are limitations due to the different styles of districts. Even though we have a stylish setting with "CTI" ambience where every display is designed to maintain consistency, the services would be difficult to be standardized. Believe it or not, the unforgettable experience of Starbucks came first and foremost from coffee aroma. Is it possible for us to add scent attractions to

shops?

Conclusion

Starbucks' success was built on one man's perseverance, his belief in a vision, and the organization's core values that finally made me realize how Starbucks continue to separate itself from other competitors. No matter how large it became, they never allow the spirit of the entrepreneur disappear. Likewise, CTI started more-or-less the same and I believe that the "change" philosophy encourages our entrepreneurial ideas. Our unique culture and CTI DNA with "family" style communication, being frank and direct, is exactly what most companies lost its when they grow.

I am enlightened that genuine attitude and passionate spirits can actually be passed on to the others, among departments as well as extending to customers. The relationship of trust and confidence both companies have built with the people who work at the company was remarkable. Short-sighted firms manage only for the benefit of the shareholders while treating its employees as a line item, a cost to be contained. Starbucks is one that leads with its heart and nurtures its soul and still make money. Here, with the proof that a company can provide long-term value for shareholders without sacrificing its core belief in treating its employees with respect and dignity, isn't it where we look for?

04. Technology is for People by Jack Ma

http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjA5MTk5NDMy.html

Jul 2011

"Technology is for people."

Jack Ma knows nothing about technology but he respects it. That's why he hires the best talents and tells those technology guys what people need. As for CTI, some may think IT is a backend supporting function working alone on coding. However, it is of utmost importance for IT talents to better understand the users. Internally, they should be encouraged to talk to frontline for building a user-friendly system with easy manipulation. Externally, we need a thorough picture of customers' desires and how to bridge the machine language with their wants. Communication skill is indeed vital to IT experts.

"Helping the others and they will help you back."

Jack holds the belief of changing the world and influencing families via technology advancement. The recommendation is that, since there is no one opportunity to make us last forever, we need to think about what social problems we can solve in order to be a great company. He identified that E-commerce was a dessert in the States while being a main course in China, where unemployment rate was extremely high. Likewise, we change the global standard by offering high speed BN with low price, helping people to enhance the quality of life.

As said by Jack Ma, staff in Alibaba focuses a lot on company values and missions. Emphasizing that the core competency is always culture but never technology, customers and employees come first. What about us?

05. Six Thinking Hats – Edward De Bono

Aug 2011

The key of reading this book is to be **open-minded**. I have had several eye-opening reflections on what I have often understood as argument and redefined my approach to more successful collaboration in the future. Edward de Bono's key concept here is that logical, linear and critical thinking has limitations because it is based on argumentation. Six Thinking Hats is a good technique for looking at the effects of a decision from a number of different points of view. These are aligned with the sharing by John Howkins at both the public event I went to and the Away Day we had just now. One of CTI's competencies is **staying young thus being innovative and creative**. Comparing with our incumbents who are restricted by the legacy system and political environment, we act faster as we generate ideas every day, as we are much younger than them intelligently.

I deliberately wrote this book report more on my perception of six thinking hats' effectiveness and how these techniques could benefit our company as how to **persistently “walk the talk”**, instead of a “play-by-play”. Though I am still fresh to the business world, I understand how noteworthy it is to **look into others' shoes** especially when working on cross-functional projects. I should learn to **allow necessary emotion and skepticism** to be brought into what would otherwise be purely rational decisions. Having this technique in mind, I will always remind myself to **open up the opportunity for creativity** within Decision Making Process.

In terms of strategic planning, I believe that plans developed based on this skill will be sounder and more resilient than would otherwise be the case. This is because the whole concept can help us to **avoid public relations mistakes**, and **spot good reasons** not to follow a course of action before we have committed to it. Since I started working during schooldays, I found that people often find it difficult to deal with “structural changes” and majorities would have ended up being a mess. I hope, whenever I encounter these, six thinking hats methodology can help to indicate problems and solutions about ideas or products I might come up with.

Some common boundaries...

Combining with the sharing from John Howkins, there are boundaries **limiting creativity as we created “standard situations”** from the past. That means we just simply judge which “standard situation box” a new situation would fall into. As shared by NiQ and Ivy, experienced ones may easily jump to a “concluded rejection”. This perhaps created the biggest obstacle in achieving synergy, consensus and good communication. My key learning

here is, **“dare to think, dare to challenge”**. This is because we should **concentrate on “what can be”**, not just about “what is”. Only when we are **eager to ask “Why not”** can we succeed in bringing breakthroughs.

Underlying Principles...

The thinking hats are useful for professionals as they illustrate the need for individuals to address problems from dynamic perspectives. I believe they can also aid me as they allow me to **recognize any deficiencies** in the way that I approach problem solving, thus allowing me to **rectify the identified issues** in a systematic way. The whole process can actually be occasionally implemented into my upcoming challenges with which it also allows my brain to maximize its sensitivity in different directions at different times so that I can solve the problems effectively. Yet, I am still trying to explore the soft skills required to cooperate with individuals.

06. Getting More – How to Achieve Your Goals in the Real World by Wharton Professor Stuart Diamond

<http://www.gettingmore.com/2011/01/getting-more-google/>

Aug 2011

After watching the video, I found that negotiation skill is actually being practiced in debating, which is what I did not realize in my 5+ debate life! Usually we use “situational negotiation” and set the ultimate goal for the match with analysis of the given motion. Process begins right with goals because only when we are sure of the final destiny could we bring the audience there. Then we need to understand the judges because as Prof. Stuart Diamond mentioned, people with varies backgrounds have different perceptions. This is how we can connect with the audience and build emotional impact with an impressive opening remarks and fabulous concluding statement. Further discussion would be on the elements taken to persuade them - how to move the others? Meanwhile, the question to be reviewed is, are we on the right track to meet the goal?

The video somehow comes at the right moment, just before we are going to be telesales in GZ next week. And there are two ideas enlightening me that I can use to win customers' heart.

“We live in an irrational and emotional world”

While power and logic were overrated as useful negotiation devices, they should no longer be used today thus salespeople relying on rational benefits to persuade customers may fail. A higher level of negotiation is to let them perceive what you want them to perceive, feel what you want them to feel. This is because customers are easily triggered by emotional touch. For example, instead of praising our achievement in “company-out” perspective, using vivid examples with “customer-in” sense would definitely enhance the whole negotiation process. As such, the first incremental value is the emotional payment, and then we proceed step by step by asking questions intentionally, leading to mutual commitment!

“Differences are profitable”

Google has been so successful not because of “Google-way” negotiation. Over 55% of it is attributed to the engagement in “People” so it is all about how much we can align with individuals and it depends on what kind of pictures on their minds can we see. Everyone has different mindsets. Digging into the perceptions of customers help us to develop competitive advantages and dealing with the differences could end up even more profitable. We have to

be able to conceive how they value things, what are the commons and differences, whether the perceptions match and why not. If we can fulfill their intangible needs, speak their languages, use their standards, we can make the connection and get the deal!

Above all, customer's entire life is important during negotiation when effective communication is fundamental. I will certainly apply these to cope with the upcoming challenges!

07. The Search: How Google And Its Rivals Rewrote The Rules of Business And Transformed Our Culture – John Battelle

Sep 2011

From reading the “play-by-play” historical evolution of Search and a key to understanding search from a business perspective, I have two key takeaways: critical factors for making revolutionary changes and getting the right people. Accordingly, my action points are to look for solutions on resolving these bottlenecks.

Change the rules of the game...

Bill Gross never gave up on his argument on an Economic Revolution. He began with one revolutionary question – *How can one differentiate between good traffic and crap?* Eric Schmidt said, “We’re looking for the next billion dollar market in technology”. This simple statement clearly showed his belief in Google becoming just that. Why not? A Billion Dollars, One Nickel at a Time!

Eventually, their visions come true, with tremendous determination. Personally speaking, it is by no means an easy decision to keep going and follow my own belief in midst of objections or lacking support. Reading more, yet, people succeed largely due to this mindset – never give up. Changes are usually perceived as “extra effort without foreseeable rewards”. What I should learn is how to persuade the others to “buy-in” the changes and execute cooperatively with willingness.

Debates on recruiting the best fit...

My biggest interest is then to find out how Google “treat” their people and it is with this kind of excitement I started turning the pages. I now realize it all starts from the hiring process. Some companies gradually lose its unique culture and falls into divisive internal politics and the malaise of hierarchically driven management games. This is because when an executive hires a person A, who is perfect for the job, intelligent and productive with perfect cultural fit. A then hires B, and B hires C, and so on. The problem is, everyone hires one that matches in professional nature, or simply do not challenge or threaten them in the career path. At the end of the day, the company will have B, C, and D being there for some of the wrong reasons.

Google prevented it by creating hiring committees that reviewed every single open position. That way, it wasn’t just one’s opinion to hire but more of a pluralistic debate. I might not have found out who designed the office, but I came to understand how they have chosen RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE RIGHT JOBS and made sure everyone is unique. It reminds me of the CXO selection process in which all department heads and MC members were involved to pick the unanimous fit. Frankly, when company grows bigger, recruitment process becomes

harder to control. As a Future CXO, I should bear in mind to void that “hiring spiral scenario” and hopefully, I could figure out a comprehensive approach for hiring the right people to get on the bus.

Conclusion and “Vision”...

Google did not become a multi-billion dollar enterprise by sheer luck, or right timing, but by true vision and creative thinking. This is the undeniable fact CTI has in common – the visionary leaders with gifted creativity.

Vibrant designs of meeting rooms, happy talents seated on colorful bean bags whilst presenting business plans, everyone brainstorming on “ping pong” tables, tea ladies with food carts serving others while being served by the “complimentary” meal from arcade.

08. What I Wish I Knew When I Was 20 – Tina Lynn Seelig

Sep 2011

“Every problem is an opportunity for a creative solution”

Knowing that I have kept spotting problems since I came on board, it is nothing bad as long as we figure out flaws/ errors because this is how we identify the opportunity to change and grow. In my humble opinion, there are always rooms for improvement especially when we look into issues from another fresh perspective. From these months, my greatest learning is **“provide solutions to boss instead of stating problems”**. It is always easier to criticizing than resolving, particularly in a creative way. To sustain my learning, I would grasp the opportunities to try delivering innovation and feasible solutions.

"Try lots of things and keep what works"

From my experience in previous jobs, experienced colleagues may unintentionally have some “standard situations” which lead to fallacy of “concluded rejections”. Thus, they may dare to try because the pessimistic ones are afraid of unbearable outcomes. To me, I think once we have done comprehensive analysis on different scenarios with risk assessment, there is no big disastrous deal trying out new things. Market changes and we never know without trying. The newest learning from NiQ:

5 Districts x 10 = 50 Crazy Ideas = 1 out-of-the-box solution

Personally, I believe the upside from keeping the 1 solution that works would override the downside of the other 49 ideas.

“You can do it all, just not at the same time”

William always coaches us that priority should be set after brainstorming ideas. NiQ also warned us the danger of “ideas overflow” because he believes that all our talents have a bunch of ideas. **Action speaks louder than words**, yet, execution is certainly not effortless. Lacking work experience, I might be missing the “prioritization” stage sometimes. And I realized that, under certain constraints, we could hardly manage everything concurrently with barely two hands and one brain. From now on, I will always remind myself to rate the urgency as part of better planning to roll out the ideas orderly, if not at the same time.

“It is the little thing that matter most”

I always believe in the affection of small acts, like I heard from our direct sales that our company sent hot soups during winter, which warm up their hearts and motivate them. When I was attached to direct sales, I bought my partner a cooling drink after my lunch as we had been standing under the sun for hours. She was so thankful and started

sharing with me the "secrets" and "tricks" from her sales experience. As shared by the marketing manager at IBM, her boss sponsored the vests for basketball team which enhance team cohesiveness. In fact, these little things count, why don't we can all do a little more, while the return could be unexpectedly tremendous?

"It really is all about the team!"

Needless to say, team work is what we always emphasize to achieve **synergy effect** because we could hardly accomplish the best without converging minds. Here, I would like to twist motto into **"It really is all about TIME"**. Having passed my 20, I wish I would have read this book years ago, as I realize that we are always racing with time which never awaits anyone. Yes, the clock is ticking fast, particularly when I knew PCCW is upgrading their Discovery Bay network exponentially to compete with us. **Never put off till tomorrow what we can do today**. Perhaps, deadlines can be the day before deadlines? What we need is to work smarter, besides harder, to **stay ahead of TIME!**

External Exposure

01. CPA Sharing session

24 May 2011

Introduction

The former Chairman of KPMG, just retired after having 37 years of experience in the accounting industry. Being brought up in HK, he did badly at school and did not get good enough grades to be re-admitted to the prominent school he went to. Not until he was sent to the UK did he start studying hard. Thereafter he achieved a distinguishable career with remarkable successes. He began the sharing with how critical humbleness and luck are to his fruitful life.

Reflections

1. Dream discovery—everyone has a dream, pursue yours!

It is of utmost significance to do something you like wholeheartedly, and you enjoy doing daily. Start everyday with motivation and stay passionate towards life. To do this you need to be truthful to yourself and do not pretend to be anyone else. When there is a successful role model giving you a feeling “Yes, I would like to be this”, aim at that and go with it! On the other hand, if you are looking for a relaxing lifestyle, do not stretch yourself. Our Chairman’s dreams come true because he has always been doing what he enjoys, and never stops. Hence, think deeply; determine what to achieve in the lifetime. It can always be extraordinary.

2. Fundamentals manipulation—start from the primary, there is no free lunch!

He gained astonishing results in professional exams and was able to secure a couple of offers. While the industry was dominated by two large firms, he decided to work for a small one because he believed that could be much more rewarding. It is necessary to comprehend the basics, or else one can barely manage to reach the apex. Before making strategic decisions, being persevered enough in learning so as to get a thorough understanding of the operations is indispensable.

3. “What-if” attitude

Do not do anything before you know what you are doing! When the former Chairman just started from scratch in KPMG, he always thought of “Why?” but was told by the seniors, “Just do it.” Yet, he looked for flaws and possible changes by imagining “What-if”. Besides, he

believed in himself and leverage on his strengths to outstand. These are all vital elements for triumph. 4 years later, all those seniors were fired. People asked, “Why do I want to do something difficult?” The answer would be, “Because you can make an impact.” Obediently following whatever is told without tasking, things can be done. Questioning everything with doubts in order to seek for the most effective solution, great things can be accomplished.

4. Visionary leadership –be insightful, develop a holistic overview!

The mentor of the former Chairman inspired him to look into the big picture which immensely broadened his horizons. Many people in the world are short-sighted, means they only look at the matters in the front and never look beyond or even further. To deliver convincing judgments, leaders must recognize the upsides and downsides, estimate risks and rewards in an attempt to gain the whole scenario of what exactly the team will be confronting.

In the Q&A session, I asked the speaker, “In the midst of a dilemma, how should we deal with it?” “Never be too proud to consult.” Grasping the gist, I realize that humbleness is one of the imperative ingredients for success. While each field has great experts, listen sincerely with hearts and candid. Search for those we genuinely admire to be our mentors. The best way to be smarter is to work with someone smarter. This is why we have talents in our company striving together for excellence by generating synergy effects!

Everyone has principles. Stick with them without deviations, and set priorities. Then we know exactly where to head to. Above all, the primary motto to be successful is, “Action speaks louder than words”.

02. Corporate Day of Goldman Sachs

26 May 2011

With merely one-time experience in attending investor meeting, I am pleased to participate in the Goldman Sachs Corporate Day on 26th May. Having the opportunity to expose myself to the experienced analysts, each meeting brought me benefits. Not only do I learn the whole operational flow, I also learn from the back-and-forth conversation in each play. This is all about wrapping up a pleasing product with splendid package because of the undoubted fact that our current financial status looks surprisingly encouraging. The debt-free structure and stable cash inflow, plus high dividend yield excite the investors though there may be uncertainties on the imminent free TV plan.

Keeping the strategic philosophy and company principles in place, the rest can always vary according to the happenings. As the communication evolves after further interactions, we need to be responsive and flexible enough to react with confidence. Having done the preparation, I was doing my best to seize on areas that I could probably add values. Yet, the biggest challenge could be how to figure out the underlying reasons for asking each question and even predict the next one.

Key learning

1. Think before we leap
2. Stay tuned and be aware of details
3. Be competitive
4. Get ready to shine
5. Feel comfortable to be a real self
6. Understand our own strengths and weaknesses

From an “I” to “Is”, lasting with an “I”

Investor meeting is more or less like speed dating. There is no designated initiator or host. Preparations are must-do task for us to grasp the background of those we are going to get in touch with. Starting off, both parties judge each other from the first eye contact or handshake which is the kick-off of impression building. Throughout the process it comes to the matter of content we deliver as well as the appeal of presentation skill. Everyone has different mindsets due to their diversified background. Hence, it is typical for each individual to perceive differently from the same piece of information. On that occasion, idea exchanges create mutual benefits for a win-win situation on top of a smooth conversation. Besides the favorable factual condition of CTI, similar as the appealing merits of a person, the chemical reaction between the two does influence the outcome.

1. Impression

Corporate day differs from a usual investor meeting because each investor is listening to around ten presentations consecutively. By the end of the day, how many can they recall? This can be a threat or opportunity indeed, depends on the impression built within the limited timeframe. From the investors' viewpoint, every tiny feeling they have experience via the six senses after stepping into the room will be taken into account. It includes the overall set-up, the way we dress, our eye contact and even some simple manners during greeting. At the beginning of the day, I was pondering on the striking element of CTI which can impress investors. Eventually I got the answer.

2. Information

Customization is always critical. Everyone wants something tailor-made, so do the investors. With the same PowerPoint prepared, we must modify each meeting according to the desires of the investors. One of the approaches is to kickoff the conversation by asking investors pertinent and open-ended questions to collect information so that we can manage the meeting in a better way. We ought to be adaptable enough to customize our communicative style, the presentation sequence, and the tone of speaking. Most importantly, highlight the key takeaways while enriching the content to be more informative. As long as we bear the basic principles and fundamental values, everything else can be adequately made-to-measure. Let them talk. Measure their expectations. Estimate the scope and the depth they want to gain in the coming hour and exceed their expectations by providing extra. That is win-win.

3. Interaction

Each meeting is unique and independent. It is a two-way communication which we need to think from the specific audience's standpoint so as to develop a dynamic overview. Putting ourselves into others' shoes allow us to cultivate a better interaction. Our CFO quotes Singapore examples to explain the telecom industry when meeting Singapore investors as well as using graphics illustrations to demonstrate complexity. Metaphor can help with familiarization of concepts too. Observe, concentrate and be alert. When we are more detail-minded and pay extra attention to the surroundings as well as the interflow, every single detail sends a message. By observing someone's reaction, it is possible to estimate their thoughts. Meanwhile, we must stay focused because investors may raise very challenging questions, or random ones. Conclusively speaking, the inter-plays could just be so diverse in a sense that the subject changes over time. The flow thence depends on how you interact.

Interpersonal skill is the critical success factor of meeting investors on the top of all. It sounds easy but you will find it problematic to define while there are just too many different ways to demonstrate the skills. Simply speaking, its success is cultivated with a win-win situation where our interactions upon others' reactions can satisfy both parties and deliver the result we desire for. With all the hardship done, the probability of success leaves us fingers-crossed. What we can achieve more is to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and understanding so that investors will have confidence and faith!

Fallacy 1

Beforehand, I was expecting a very formal and challenging environment in each meeting. I thought the air would be freezing while the atmosphere would be suffocating. That was not the case, however. The corporate day runs like speed dating in a manner that we are on a testing ground observing each other, deciding whether this can be a possible match. Both sides have choices. It actually is much more relaxing like seeing a batch of new friends whom you merely know a little. Some catalysts are required. They can be the similarities in backgrounds, the spark during conversation, and the humorous from bragging or even something awkward. End up a "VIP" list will be created for building long-term relationship.

Fallacy 2

There was a wrong perception – every investor has done substantial research on CTI and had a clear direction or purpose before heading to the meeting. It was first stunning to reveal the fact that some of them even had no idea about the Telecom industry! They may come with a blank idea of what's going on and without too much expectation. Nevertheless, if we can trigger their interests through pitching, leaving them a remarkable impression, they will be back very soon. Thus, we are always required to look into matters from various angles and be prepared to speak from multiple points of view. At this rate, it is also necessary to have a thorough understanding from the basic operations to the high-level strategic plans.

03. Kellogg Impact Series

3 Jun 2011

“Competitive strategies for Chinese companies in a global economy”

Mr. Martin Lau – President, Tencent Holding Limited

Mr. James Tong – CEO, Hong Kong Dragon Airlines Limited

Mr. Ricky Wai Kei Lau – Partner, TPG Capital Limited

Summary of the panel discussion

1. China’s competitive Airline Industry with lower cost

- After losing for years, Dragon Airline makes money recently because of the China operators. The truth is the three biggest are all in China with China (CX) being the 1st worldwide.
- There should be new modes and systems to compete with international companies even though James thinks they are now competitive on price, passenger and services. Biggest worry to James is the competition for resources like pilots, crew and landing slots as there are too many flight delays.

2. Expansion of HKIA which triggers public chaos

- When domestic stream is growing rapidly, going international as an offshore company is difficult due to the inevitable obstacles such as cultural difference and political approvals.
- To better compete with others, expansion is necessary after cost-benefit analysis so the argument is who will pay. James said that there will be a solution eventually.

3. Competitive Advantage when competing with global corporations

- Ricky stressed on the increasing population of Chinese as well as their tremendous expenditure, hence, a large home market customer base is important to build up TPG’s business.
- For Tencent, tangible services would be critical to success because product is too easy to replicate, especially after Facebook set a golden standard for social networking and creates disruptive changes. Dragon Airline relies a lot on the front line crew because James believes that only when you are closer to users, you can have a better understanding of customers’ preference like food and entertainment and thus respond faster.

4. Marketing in brand building

- Ricky believes acquisition of a brand outside can help to bridge the external world and penetrate the market even deeper, quoting the example of IBM and Thinkpad.
- There should be distinctive competitive advantage for Tencent to compete with global brands and Martin is trying to figure out the market niche
- Airline needs a relatively longer time to build the brand because the return is not clear in short term. Therefore, some China operators think being a recognized brand in China is good enough

5. Risk management

- TPG is building worldwide units in the US and Europe, which Ricky considers as a must for expansion of customer base. He completely realizes the risk of outbound merger and acquisition and admits that not only reputational risks but also political risks are close-to-heart.
- Martin said the management of reputational risk attributes to the outstanding PR who must be reacting fast to public requests and having the best responses to the market.
- There are varies business models for Airlines, yet, it all starts from recruitment and trainings. While the frontline crew will be the contact point representing the corporation, service failure cultivates risks, leading to a disaster.

Key takeaways:

- Other than competing on price and services which we already outstand the incumbents, we should look for other new modes of competition.
- When investors are commonly concerned on our overseas expansion, we should figure out the elements we lack and the ways to deal with underlying political issues which every company faces when going global if this is one of the options in the future. To enhance investors' and customers' confidence, partnering with a global brand helps us to bridge the outside world.
- Retention must be cheaper than acquisition. We do need a stable and loyal customer base in our home market to growth. Turning intangible services into tangible attributes is indispensable.
- Risk assessment is vital in every proposal. It does not limit to separating our MC members on different flights but extends to each decision made at all levels across the company.

Reflection

How can we make an impact? Throughout the whole dialogue, every distinguishable guest

emphasized that human capital is increasingly important in determining the success of a company. Martin moved from McKinsey to Goldman Sachs and now he stays in a consumer business where he can work with the best engineers and talents. The CEO of an Airlines company says that hiring the best people becomes his major concern, besides cost control within such a cyclical business environment. Reliance on know-how makes people the top priority.

I am indeed amazed by the talent development scheme of Hong Kong Dragon Airlines which the management team will swap positions with leaders of their overseas partners so as to gain international experience. This is critical to talents not only for their personal growth and self-actualization but also because leader's global vision is one of the critical success factors of a great company. Even when selecting potential overseas partners, the first criterion is the management team. The joint-venture with Groupon in Chicago is the best take-up for Tencent since the president appreciates their founders and management. Like CTI, our MC members have diversified backgrounds with which idea exchanges from different perspectives provide the best solutions. Employees from Unilever and IBM or other noble firms help with the transition of the Tencent while talent recruitment of CTI engages us the opportunity to cooperate with the smart and influential ones whom we can always learn from. This is how synergy works out.

Personally speaking, mingling with new friends in the cocktail session was not difficult and I sometimes bumped into someone who knows NiQ! Being a non-alumnus, I introduced our "CXO of Future" and "PowerBar" to everyone I met in an attempt to interest them. All of them congratulated me on having such valuable opportunities to meet the seniors and learn from the professionals. I think our talents should also be proud to have chances to rotate and gain exposure for personal development. The Dean gave an insightful remark as well. She understands that a new approach should be given out to re-create an international culture which can differentiate Kellogg. "No dream is too big or too small." This is so inspiring because we always stressed that having a dream is of utmost significance for each talent to go further beyond. Company-wise, we already have a common dream.

Though we have not yet reached global prominence, we are building our brand together. Our leaders are striving for excellence and improvement, seizing every single opportunity and market niche to crash the incumbents. Provided that we are sharing the same company values and riding on our vision statement for every act, winning is a must ultimately.

04. Team Leadership Training

6 Jul 2011

The training was slightly too theoretical to me. Frankly speaking, it was not what I expected as I was looking for more practical examples and case sharing from a professional advisor. As a matter of fact, the day was “practical” in a sense that I took away “summarized theories”. Yet, there was little factual support. I then realized, there are certain differences between teaching and doing.

Recalling my schooldays, lectures were boring because teachers never work in the reality or deal with business situations. If they ever had a chance to, they could barely do well as explained in class because those scenarios are too idealistic. On the other hand, some experienced professionals may not be able to teach because not everyone has the ability to transfer know-how. While product knowledge or core hard skills can be transferred through text, we need communication skills to teach and enlighten the others. The best trainers teach and do effectively. In my opinion, our chairman is very good at this, being able to transfer his skills, tell what he does, to coach and communicate with audience besides merely presenting. Along the day I keep on asking myself, “How will I do differently?” After the day, the question left is, “How to multiply the speed of learning?” To be revealed. I somehow came up with an analogy of frozen yoghurt. Years ago, we could hardly find any yoghurt shop in Hong Kong. Recently, this frozen dessert is everywhere around us. Why do we love it so much? Putting it into the context of training, how to conduct a successful workshop?

1. Close-to-market: The majority is having yoghurt, it is a trend. Business environment is dynamic with changes over time. We need to know about the current issues and understand the recent concerns of target groups. To cater the immediate needs of the group, training must include close-to-market information.

2. Made-to-order: You can choose your favorite flavor. Everyone loves freshly tailor-made product and services. Preparation is fundamental. When we have everything ready, we can be more flexible to accommodate the audience. The first of all criteria is having a specific target group in an optimal size. Understanding of the profiles of the audience help with better grounding of the main content. Pre-survey and post-survey carry equal importance, for preparation and evaluation.

3. Extra toppings: When you are half-done with your yoghurt but there is no more temptation, add some toppings! Trainers should be good observer.

Materials should be geared up in case being asked for extra. No matter how long or short training is being able to manage audience's interests is vital to keep up their spirit all the way around. It would be great if instant requests can be addressed and taken care of. The whole workshop would be more appealing with value-creation add-ons.

4. Fruitful experience: Having yoghurt is somehow a group activity, a shared enjoyment. From beginning to end, the whole experience cheers up the audience. After training sessions, you want people to remember, to learn, to have some key takeaways. Therefore it is critical to enrich the content and to make it more fulfilling, via diversifying the activities included and encouraging exchanges. This leads to a rewarding and fruitful workshop.

Humble as it is beneath all that rough, unattractive skin, the potato can play significant role. Potato has spread across the globe and throughout cultures. No doubt, it is the tip-top of all tubers. And the pinnacle of potato-dom? The mashed potato.

Being the youngest in the group, it is normal to be “stereotyped” as a green, inexperienced fresh graduate who just came and sat (like a potato?). When I was first addressed by the trainer, she kindly let me know she would try to slow down the pace and simplify the content for my easy understanding. She encouraged me to ask questions whenever I have difficulties. Here's how it went on. Fresh potato takes time to bake. The theories on the note were actually taught during my study in the past few years. How to convince the others? I then tried to build trust and confidence with active participation and meaningful contributions. Potato-dom soon became a baked potato which after boiling and processing the concepts, asked thoughtful questions. Robust conversations heated up the team and gradually I became more influential. I was even appointed to present after group discussion. Baked potato should not stop seeking for advancement though.

For that reason, I identified couple of areas for improvement. Extra ingredients make the baked potato more delicious and additional crushing leads to better texture. Likewise, I will look for opportunities to reach out and learn with humbleness so as to equip myself with a more comprehensive skill set, absorbing nutrition for growth (like a sponge?). Understanding that there will be lots of challenges around to corner, I must be able to cope with all ups and downs. Everyone makes mistakes, how to learn from them and do prevention is of immense

importance. One more step ahead is to crush the others with a heavy punch to enjoy winning ultimately. This is how I can be a mashed potato in foreseeable future.

“Everyone can be your teacher.” This was a sharing from a department head who has been working in the same college for nearly 20 years. In his own career life, he often gains insights from his students because no one is perfect and no one knows everything. Everybody can contribute as long as one is open-minded and determined enough. Idea exchanges cultivate mutual benefits. This is how we can have a fast-track development, by learning continually.

Targeting to have a vertical learning curve, I always remind myself to learn from everyone around, not limited to the security guard who has the highest awareness of suspects. The above is for sharing, multiplying the speed of learning. Thanks for your attention indeed.

Let's get ready to enjoy the life-long learning process!

Learning from Team Leadership Training

Difference between leader and manager

A very modest differentiation is that there is only one type of manager but many styles of leadership. Managers have authority to do what they want, sometimes without much consensus. Leaders do things in an advanced way by “influencing” the team, directing an individual and guiding the subordinates to achievement and success. The best leaders are both great coaches and mentors as they are not only a good role model but also inspire the team to perform and excel towards company vision and mission.

In the context of situational leadership, informal leadership somehow works better in certain occasions that in my opinion, I think it should be part of the others, depending on the diverse situations. Within a casual atmosphere, where things are caused to happen, leaders show interests by asking questions, provide recognitions and do follow-up, even pre-up. All in all, we need assertive leaders with power and authority to move people under time constraints. Meanwhile, gaining consensus and commitment to common objectives can get others to follow more willingly. The best leaders are able to strike a balance between both.

China Light Power does a good job by training up leaders' facilitation skills for engagement and let them take higher accountability of projects. This is more-or-less like our mini-CEO structure within which district heads are somehow leading the “mini-company” in their own

style. They bear entire responsibility while being given the ownership and authority by our CEO who is overseeing the whole picture in a macro viewpoint.

Management skill is the process that exists to get results by making the best use of human, financial and material resources.

Leadership skill is the ability to influence group members so as to help achieve the goals of the group and be able to set the vision

Do things right VS do right things

I have been raising this question to many people for a couple of weeks. Respondents with dynamic backgrounds may have totally different opinions, varying among generations and industries, depending on experience. Finally, I got a preliminary-understandable answer here. Basically, doing things right is the foundation of putting the house in order, ensuring operations are working orderly and systematically. This is management, a result-oriented way to get things done by all means as long as it is done. We can list a chain of related tasks at ease, e.g. planning and budgeting, organizing and staging, delivering result and reaching KPI etc. Especially when we take traditional practice as reference, most of them worked in such a logical algorithm, measuring in terms of quantity, quality, cost and timeliness. Management, in its simplest way, maximum yield with minimum cost.

Do right things is establishing directions, aligning people and producing useful changes. Likewise, NiQ always remind us to “change for the sake of change” with which we can have further breakthroughs from channels of inspirations and enlightenment. We can also have great fun and self-satisfaction out of it. To complement this rationale, Ricky set us mission and vision hence bringing talents up to the line, motivating everyone with passion and making sure the dedicated ones buy-in the whole vision statement. As shared, IBM develops specialists and generalists whereas all-round rotation opportunities are given to keep productive people. Nevertheless, frequent reviews are planned for rethinking change possibility to continuously improve and innovate for sustainable development.

Managers are, in a nutshell, executing organizational goals and that's why they are required to do things right. Leaders are required to choose what's best for the organization, so whenever they make a decision and plan on a strategy, they essentially are doing the right thing (or better described as choosing the right course of action). Coaches are required to do both because:

1. They are required to coach their coachees to learn and acquire the right skills and knowledge in order to achieve the best results.

2. They are required to understand the organizational goal and in turn cascade the knowledge down to their coachees to ensure that they are being developed in the right direction.

Management is doing the thing right.

Leadership is doing the right thing

COACHING IS DOING THE RIGHT THING RIGHT

True Leader – self-learning

Roles of a Leader

From the presentation of the Country Manager of a medical company, I learnt not only his communication skills but also was deeply impressed by his analogy of “leader” as collar and cuff (In Cantonese). While Collar refers to Principle, Authority and Efficiency, Cuff means Care, Flexibility and Adaptability. That kept me thinking of the necessary elements to be a true leader, which I thought I identified all of the required characteristics and charisma after reading “Winning”. Yet, I did not.

It comes to a matter that, the more I know, the more complicated it is, and the more I realize I do not know. There are indeed too many different roles for a leader to take up under varying occasions, with diversified teams. On the top of all, understanding of the team would be a must while leaders have to take their team members’ personalities into consideration whatever style they use. Theoretically, below are the categorized roles.

i. Facilitator

- Help team get acquainted, feel comfortable with one another
- Provide orientation on team goals and objectives
- Help to maximize the use of group resources such as skills, knowledge, working styles

ii. Mediator

- Manage and resolve conflict effectively
- Handle problem solving and decision making
- Build trust among team members.

iii. Consultant

- Serve as a resource to the team
- Ready to help diagnose problems
- Provide just-in-time solutions and training
- Counsel team members for professional development.

iv. Collaborator

- Build relationships and partnerships with team
- Work for team as contributor

- Provide opportunity for team members with control on process.

I would like to particularly emphasize on “Coach”, which is an indispensable skill for great leaders. By definition, coaching is a collaborative approach to help individuals develop to become accountable and effective. It is a partnership that seizes opportunities to allow people to learn. While the coach needs to have a selfless (ego-less) motive, the coachee learns through self-discovery and learning.

Why coaching is doing the right things right? When team leaders become encouragers and strategists for team, they can help team to perform tasks effectively and coach the team as a whole. To get things done in a perfect sense, it is essential to work with individual to follow team operating style and attain goals.

Being a great Coach

In the HR conference I attended last week, I met the Business Development Manager of Active Communication. Being amazed by our fast-track programme, we shared some work experience and he told me that Mentoring and Coaching are totally different skills. However, people always confuse the two. And the fact that a lot of people get the terminology wrong is because they are very close in objectives: it is all about moving people forward and helping others to develop in the best way possible.

Triggered by the conversation, I started to research for extra materials, from surfing the net to reading particular books, seeking for an easily-understood definition of the two terms and studying how they complement each other. With my initial findings, I find out that mentoring is more related to work, coaching is for all-round development, not limited to work but extended to personal aspects.

Here is an example for better understanding.

Let's say you wanted to learn to drive a car and you hired a....

Counsellor- the counsellor would help you find out what might be holding you back from driving the car. Together you would delve into your past to discover what kinds of experience you have had with automobiles.

Consultant, the consultant would bring you an owner's manual and tell you everything you ever wanted to know about the workings of a car. The consultant would then leave you. She might return six months later to see how you had managed the actual driving part.

Mentor, the mentor would share her experiences of driving cars and the wisdom and lessons she had learned in her more rich experience with the matter.

Coach, the coach would seat you in the car, place himself in the passenger seat, and encourage, endorse, acknowledge and support you until you felt comfortable enough to do it alone.

Being directly coached by our current CXOs, I personally believe coaching is a skill to develop the potential ones and it encourages responsibility, leading to ideal performance and outcome. First and foremost, two-way communication is required, in both formal and informal ways. Besides, good coach should seize each opportunity to perform the best of this role. There is a common phenomenon that people may be afraid of hiring someone smarter than they are, so good coaches should be prepared to take risks in helping the coachee to learn and succeed.

Who can be a good coach? Managers with certain essential qualities. They know their people's strengths and weaknesses for better job division as well as looking for potential in their people and help them think for themselves so as to ensure sustainable relationships. More importantly, showing confidence in the team enhance efficiency in a whole and generate synergy effects.

To be great coaches, leaders are expected to take this expertise to a higher realm, other than being a **SUCCESSFUL COACH**, they also need to fulfill the role of a mentor. A mentor is expected to provide expertise to less experienced individuals to help them advance their careers, enhance their education, and build their networks.

From my personal experience, I can conclude some determinant traits from the qualities of coaches and mentors I met during study and internships. A great coach is able to create space where individuals can clearly think about what they want to get done, besides recognizing what is expected from them. Understanding that this could be harder said than done at workplace, a regular review perhaps may balance both. Besides, we actually learn best when we are allowed to take charge of our own learning, this is another kind of accountability and responsibility, to oneself. Once the coach realizes this, with thoroughgoing understanding, more comprehensive development can be resulted.

Above all, ultimate goal is to “win the game”. The best coach will always hope for the prosperous achievement of coachee because they understand they are developing a star player who can win the game for the organization and bring sustainable victory.

05. HR conference – HR Trends and Compliance Strategies by HR Magazine

13 Jul 2011

For learning – ISP

Integrity

A recent HR survey shows that integrity is the second most critical value for employees nowadays and companies are suggested to demand it at a high level so as to ensure the best products and processes. Simply put it, “If you keep telling the truth, you don’t need to remember anything you say”, that’s integrity. Companies should put emphasis on the significance of compliance in which a methodical approach should be well-developed. When we look at the nature carefully, everything actually has a pattern, e.g. birds fly orderly, bees work systematically. That’s the law of nature, the system which regulates lives.

At CTI, this is included as our aspirational value that must be taken into serious consideration before making a decision. To talents, we have Internal Audit and Talent Management setting policies and system for compliance issues, meanwhile, Internal Control is occasionally prompted by our Management Committee Members. To customers, we should always be able to deliver promises and make fair deals. For whatever reasons, we must comply with the core values and be honest to ourselves.

Social Responsibility

“We are committed to adding values to our colleagues and customers with the aim to improve the quality of life of the Hong Kong people.” – Pfizer

From time to time, it is palpable that companies withholding a belief to be responsible to the society can succeed. Like what Jack Ma said, help the others and they will help you back, so only if we think of a social problem to solve could we embrace sustainable success. Company-wise, we are determined to advancing the technology for the public’s interests and contributing to the benefit of the society. Individually speaking, we should show support and care to our society by eagerly participating in CSR activities.

Passion

“To be an enterprise that has the happiest employees” – Alibaba

There are three essential elements of a business, the 3Ps. People are the trunk of a tree and Products are the leaves. On the top of all, Passion is the root of it. When I asked the speaker

how to prioritize these, he assertively responded to me that people should come first, and passion is a source for growth. This is because products are nothing if there are no people, like leaves can never grow without deep roots and thick trunks.

During the networking sessions, I was so proud to introduce to other guests about our “direct and frank” culture and excellence of Talent Engagement Department which treat all CTI talents as “Internal VIPs”. We have series of diversified activities and engagement workshops as well as development opportunities to fulfill our self-actualization. These prove how much CTI has committed to nurture the passionate ones. Undoubtedly, care is embedded in our workplace and our talents are consistently extending this spirit to the community. “We believe in keeping our people happy, who will in turn keep our customers happy!” - CTI

For improvement

Never too greedy

First and foremost, the key message of a presentation must be clear enough for audience to take away. We should stay focus as the fewer the words on the slides the better to avoid distracting the audience from the speech. Being too greedy will confuse the floor with overwhelming information.

Secondly, never fall into the “curse of knowledge”. Vivid descriptions and story-telling are good aids for illustration. Yet, when there is time constraint, I should be more selective and specific because without background information, examples may be difficult to understand. Therefore, stories should be impressive enough with sufficient details for thorough understanding.

Making “WOW” impact

CTI talents are people’s leader and pioneer. As we are always staying ahead to lead the development of the industry, I could include some up-to-date information about the technology advancement which may surprise the floor to create “WOW” effect. In a HR conference like this, there should be HR experts telling latest HR trend. In that case I can shock them by introducing the state-of-art technology. Perhaps in other financial events, I could impress others with our Marketing Strategies or Talent Engagement Programs.

06. Round Table Investor Relation Seminar

21 Jul 2011

Preparation for Round Table Investor Relations Seminar

As a listed company, it is of utmost significance for us to build investor relationships. Learnt from NiQ that the outcome is somehow a matter of hardship, I would like to understand more about the underlying framework. With my little experience gained in investor meetings and Goldman Sachs Corporate Day, it is about time for me to start comprehending the skills and techniques required to strive for capital in this competitive financial market. To be well-prepared for the seminar, there are a couple of expected learning points out of curiosity:

1. The level of importance for companies with different scales
2. Types of meetings
3. Preparation needed to meet investors with dynamic backgrounds
4. Use of figures and facts
5. Best Marketing techniques to create “WOW” effect

Investor Relations - Objective

With a quick study of IR, here are the main points for sharing. The main purpose of Investor Relations activities is actually to provide a satisfying liquidity of the company's shares and a correct valuation of the company, and further to improve the potential for the supply of fresh capital at competitive prices, as and when needed. To better accomplish this, some traits are necessary.

Consistent and continuous communication

All items of importance to the setting of the share price are better to be transparent, if possible. To establish long-term relationship with investors, mutual trust must be built through consistency and communication. What else I observed NiQ has done is to keep on engaging the investors via both formal meetings and informal catch-ups. No matter they have invested or not, they are invited to receive our Investor Memo, extended to those with potential of investing and strong network of seniors.

Experience and expertise

Investor Relations consultancy offers substantial international experience and know-how in the practical (hands-on) application of traditional as well as Internet based Investor Relations routines. As far as I know, we do have them helping out in meetings with overseas investors such as the roadshow William and Alice attended. Besides, with his previous work experience, NiQ has been able to communicate really well with investors in “common language”. How can I get there?

Learning from IR Seminar - Competing for Capital

Why investor meetings?

- Listed company has costs for listing such as periodical results announcements so it has to increase market value by these enhancement programs.
- The level of financial communication and transparency to all stakeholders integrated together for marketing purpose, showing compliance of securities law.
- 4 components: outreach, compliance, transparency, intelligence where the perception of management strategy should be incorporated
- Good investors will not invest before seeing the management because the gist of this mill is too dynamic to be limited to a simple mechanics of written communication. It is more about trust which should be built from looking in the eyes of management, judging personality and credibility and assessing leadership style.

How to win?

- All financial community contact should begin with clearly defined objective which answers questions like, what do we want the investors to know, think or feel about our company. The ultimate goal is to gain trust and confidence for investment opportunities.
- There should be differentiation in preparing communication strategy, according to different type of audience, interpretation and messages to be sent. Hence, the fundamentals are to understand the market, products/services, marketing tools as well as being able to manage the tools.
- Targeted marketing is more precise and specific for firms in all scales because it defines the competitive position in the investment community. It is then necessary to think differently via internal debates and contributions. The art of communicating value starts from the investment proposition.

To guide or not to guide?

- Guidance is the value-creation tool used to build credibility over time. The key elements are: higher multiple (PE ratio), better valuation (market making ability) and increased wealth for management and shareholders.
- From the viewpoint of analysts, after understanding the management's expectation and collection company information, they will determine the relative market value and define an investment story. Since they have high autonomy to create these for clients to buy stocks, it is critical to communicate well with them.

Action point

1. Investor Survey

- i. Perception: for pricing goodwill which will be valued by the market via communication and mutual agreement on level of openness, company culture and management's ambitions
- ii. Targeting: to "track and trace" potential shareholders via peer-group analysis, i.e. deeply analyze competitor's followers not limited to any basic information but how they fund themselves, what is their portfolio, how do they sell themselves to investors.

2. Supporting communication

- i. New social media: building e-forum for investors, like our CTI forum, so that they can gain updated information via facebook/ twitter etc. to increase level of transparency
- ii. Shareholder portal: creating a platform with individual a/c for all shareholder to check out personal portfolio as well as receiving any memos or events invitations, this serves a main the purpose of creating a "share" culture which perfectly match with ours

3. Corporate market day

- i. What: an informal visit by a group of potential investors/ analysts
- ii. When: new launch of product or service or campaign
- iii. Where: CTI office, sites and GZ call center
- iv. Who: CXOs talk about insights/strategies, supported by related specialist invited
- v. Why: provide an in-depth look at CTI's plans for future operations and key factors involved in management and execution to increase transparency
- vi. How: arrange 2-day schedule for guests, guided by a senior management to both HK and GZ, communicate in both formal and informal channels

07. Digital Marketing Workshop – Teaching Kit

12-13 Aug 2011

E-business strategies

- Value chain in business model
 - ✓ E-commerce: exchange of products and information
 - ✓ E-CRM: marketing, sales, services
 - ✓ SEO: increase web traffic via organic search results
 - ✓ Intranet + Internet + Extranet
- Forms of e-marketing
 - i. Digital Signage: targeted ad
 - ii. Mobile marketing
 - iii. Podcasting
 - iv. Online marketing: banner ads, sponsorships, interstitial, micro site

Key success factors for social marketing

1. Content Development
 - Hook: understand phraseology of social sites for design of emotional headline
 - Media: maximize link bait opportunities to extend “call-to-action” for sharing
 - Consistently produce ideas
 - Use unique angles for execution
2. Distribution
 - Use known account for credibility
 - Be outreach via befriending authorities
3. Social Buzz & Exposure
 - Shift attention from content to inherent value
 - Push for attention from buzz for front paging
 - “Good bait leads to good backlinks”
4. Search Engine Marketing
 - Increase visibility
 - Optimization: Rank higher than competitors
 - Results Page: Sponsored paid ad/ organic listing

Web analytics – What are the values?

- Methodologies
 - 1 Define goals (SMART)
 - 2 Metrics (KPI): bounce rate/ visitor acquisition/ parameters/ search analytics

- 3 Collect data for analysis
- 4 Change for improvement
- Decision making: AMAT→KPI setting
 - 1 Acquisition of visitors
 - 2 Measurement of performance
 - 3 Analysis of trends
 - 4 Testing to improve
- Insights from reports: Benchmarking

Social networking – How can we utilize?

- Fundamental: communication and collaboration
- Viral messaging reaches more people in a faster, cheaper and personal way
- Viral marketing induces Majestic River Ventures' customers to get their friends hooked
 - 1 Strengthen relationship among customers
 - 2 Establish a sharing culture within company
 - ◆ Groups: Public, Invitation, Private

Key to success – Make the application compelling

- 1 Social – helps users interact and communicate more effectively
- 2 Useful – delivers value by addressing real world needs, from entertainment to practical tasks
- 3 Expressive – enable users to share more about who they are and the world around
- 4 Engaging – provides a deep experience that users want to come back

User-generated content (UGC)

• Business Applications	• Examples
• Sales ratings and reviews	• www.amazon.com
• Marketing (crowdsourcing)	• www.ryzwear.com
• Product support and problem solving	• www.msdn.com
• Product research and development	• www.spore.com
• Bait for Advertising	• www.youtube.com
• Part of product	• www.finewoodworking.com

i. Benefits

- 3x trust over advertiser claims
- Increase loyalty
- Increase brand involvement
- Sharing culture among discussion group

ii. Impact

- Increase conversion rates
- Provide information for product marketing

iii. Reviews

- Value creation
- Utilization rate
- Risks assessment
- Benchmark: Armani's Facebook Page

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – Benefits and Risks

- For: employee, sales partners, customers
- Areas: after-sales services, complaint handlings, business opportunities generation
- Steps: Identify, Differentiate, Interact, Customize
- ✓ Target the best customers
- ✓ Real-time customization and personalization
- ✓ Track records
- ✓ Consistent customer experience and superior services
- ❑ Lack of understanding
- ❑ Rely too much on application without changing business processes
- ❑ Stakeholders are not participating/prepared

Targeted Marketing: from 4Ps to 7Cs

- Context, Content, Community, Customization, Communication, Connection, Commerce
- 1 Community – customized to appeal people within specific group
- 2 Content – placed on selected websites for specific audience
- 3 Context – placed on relevant web pages of similar products
- 4 Demographic – aimed at types/ classes/ people
- 5 Online Behavior – promotion efforts tailored to each individual's visits

Personal learning

1. From context
 - Never single-out marketing, digital marketing is cross-functioned
 - Importance of frequent website updates
 - RFM analysis – measure customer values (Recency, Frequency, Monetary)
 - Transfer Objectives and Key Results (OKR) to KPIs
2. From trainer
 - Using updated statistics
 - Preparation on participants' backgrounds

C. Reflection by Mingo Tsang

Book and Video Reflections

01. The Present – Spencer Johnson

Jun 2011

*“Yesterday is History,
Tomorrow is a Mystery,
Today is a Gift,
That’s why we call it the present!”*

Put your emphasis at present...

It is rather natural to find people getting distracted while working. Indeed, even when I am now typing, some trivial items will suddenly pop up, like what kinds of food I should have for my dinner or how many words I should write for this essay. It is very natural for our efficiency at work to be lessened as a result.

This book reminds us of a very important message---keep yourself focused! Only when you are single-minded on everything would you have the highest efficiency and more time to enjoy life, therefore leading you to a greater success.

More importantly, living in the present not only means focusing on something happening at the time being but also on something pleasant and exquisite, which would certainly enhance your confidence, motivate you to work harder and grant you more power to cope with different obstacles. As such, exploring the beauty of life and treasuring them at every moment is the greatest gift from the creator.

As for me, it is not hard to keep myself concentrated at work because I would consider it as my responsibility, but sometimes it is quite easy for me to neglect the beauty of the present and thus not able to enjoy every single moment. Having 5 minutes before works to explore the interesting stuff may be a good way for me in this regard.

Look back and forward.....

Merely focusing on the present is far from enough to entirely embrace the present. I am reminded that I have to learn how to look back over the past and forward to the future. It is

because if I have learnt nothing from the past, it is likely that bygone is not a bygone. Only when I get inspired from the past and release those loads weighing on my minds, my present performance would be reinforced as well. Likewise, despite the unforeseeable nature of the future, more detailed thinking of one's dreams, higher possibility that it will come true. Thus, it is suggested everyone should instantly dream of a future, make a plan and do something to realize their dreams.

This part of content is very true from my experience. Sometimes a failure in the past is suffocating in a sense that you do not even want to face the same situation again. Yet, you should stand up from where you fall down and that is the only way you can grow. Apart from this, we like to think big but seldom can we achieve big. Dream will only be a dream should you do nothing on it. It is more important for us to do something rather than only think something.

Nevertheless, the author also reminded us that all our efforts will go in vain if we do not have a clear objective in life. Therefore, having a goal to strive towards is vital for everyone to learn from the past, seize the present and plan for the future. In my opinion, this goal can be largely varied among different people. More successful only means higher degree of achieving what you are capable of achieving. Your goal is solely yours. You are not supposed to borrow from others. To me, once the goal is set, I would make painstaking efforts to fight for it so that I will not be regretful in the future.

Something more.....

“The Present” is a very special book in a sense that the author had spent more than 5 years to write while you merely need around 1 hour to read. Despite the length of the book, it is one of the hottest books in 2004. It unveiled the truth that lengthy content and complicated ideas do not suit the needs of modern people anymore. People demand concise message. More importantly, people prefer something inspiring them to think rather than something instructing them to do. In the book, instead of telling you a principle to follow like what typical books do, the author provides readers with a story from which readers can observe the growth of the characters and choose something they deem practical and meaningful to learn. With this approach, the idea can be instilled and embedded naturally.

What our company can learn from this is that it would be better for our advertisements and sales to induce questions rather than giving answers. Instead of urging people to use our service, motivating them to think why I have to pay more for a slower BN service and providing them with real case examples are more preferable and receiver-friendly.

The Present.....

As a fresh graduate and a management trainee, sometimes the pressure is high because it seems not acceptable to make mistakes although everyone would make some in their life. Thanks to Mr. Spencer Johnson, when I learn the secret of the present, I get motivated and encouraged during the period of adaptation at work. I would certainly recommend this book to anyone who are lacking in motivation and enthusiasm.

02. 馬雲內部講話 (The internal speech of Jack Ma) – Alibaba Group

Jul 2011

This book comprises most of the important speeches of Jack Ma, usually at some critical points of Alibaba group and the economy. How did he encourage his staffs who are already millionaires? How did he project the company's future during the downturn? What is his outlook on life? All answers he suggested are interesting and impressive. Despite this, in this reflection, I will put all these aside but emphasize on his views towards a great leader, which to me are the most insightful and worthy of sharing.

Features of a great leader

1. Enhance instead of utilize your staffs

Good leader can be the best staff, but great leader can run the best company. It is because what a leader manages should not be a single project or task. Great leader only manages priority. As long as you can assign a right person to a right position, that person should be the one who manages the project. After all, only through empowerment would you gain power. In addition to mere empowerment, the best leader can foresee the future needs and enhance people for the sake of that. In other words, the best leader can empower people based on both current and future circumstances.

In my opinion, it is a “step-by-step” process and you cannot reach the sky in a single bound. With a view to gaining authority, you have to show them you are capable of being the best staff at the first place. Only after that could you manage priority well by virtue of your hands-on experience in the past. As of foreseeing the future and equipping someone in advance, it should be a blend of long experience, broad visions, natural talents and, perhaps, a little bit luck.

2. Strike a proper balance

Jack Ma suggested that professional management is scientific but good leadership is artistic. From his point of view, it is all about balance.

For the development of the company, you have to prepare for the worst at the peak and cheer your staff up during a downturn so that the company can grow in a healthy way; For different parties inside the company, you have to balance their power and give fair judgments; For every single staff, you have to balance their workloads and their psychological feelings so as to retain the capable talents.

In our company, having a good balance is crucial. Example can be sought from my experience in CRA where the team leader will put more resources and time on guiding the inexperienced or incapable telesales. As a result, team morale and performance are reinforced as a whole.

3. Provide them with principles, Encourage them with heart, Motivate them by profit, Restrict them by compliances

A good execution plan should include all the above elements. With principles, people know the meanings and reasons of the new project. With encouragement, people feel much better while they are doing. With profit, they would make more effort. With compliances, they could work on the right track.

More importantly, many leaders may reverse the order of the above, by prioritizing compliances and profit. This may work for a short period of them, but people would be likely to quit when they are sick of the compliances or they can get a salary jump. Jack's success is bolstered by his clear vision to create "values" for the mass and his sensational speeches when the company was in plummet. In a word, principles and encouragement are of utmost importance.

This concept inspired me to think more.

For a new product launch like our \$9.9 HT, have we implemented the plan with regard to all 4 elements? How many talents had fully understood the meaning of this plan as a Trojan Horse which is a foundation for future success? Did we have enough encouragement to our talents? Had we developed a special bonus system for frontlines to sell this lowest-contract-sum plan? Had we set an obligating target for this plan? Indeed, these 4 elements are really constructive to any execution plans.

4. Be yourself

As suggested by Jack Ma, all the brilliant leaders in the world reflect their true self on stage. They might have different presentations under different circumstances, but their inner core of themselves was, is and will be the same. You would have the sense of security and strong confidence only when you are yourself. Staffs will not appreciate a leader who always pretends. Leader having sense of humor is appealing; however, it will not be funny for a serious man pretending to be humorous.

It reminded me that when I want to benchmark my presentation skill with other notable presenters in the world, I should not simply copy them or pretend to be them without thinking of myself. Instead, I should merge their "WOW" effects with my own personality and eliminate those apparently not appropriate for my true self.

03. 敢想。敢做 (Dare to imagine, Dare to execute) – Ricky Wong

Aug 2011

Before reading the whole book, I had planned to translate "敢想敢做" into "Dare to think, Dare to do" as the book title for simple understanding and interpretation. Yet, after I finished the book, I eventually perceived that this simple translation is not sufficiently presenting what Ricky intended to tell the readers. "Dare to think, Dare to do" seems only encouraging people to think more and do more, but this is far from what Ricky defined as success.

As such, after my second thought, I determined to use "Dare to imagine, Dare to execute" as the title which would be, in my opinion, more precise and accurate in interpreting the philosophy of Ricky. I will explain them one by one.

We think a lot every day. What to eat, what to buy, what to watch can all be deemed a kind of "thinking". Despite this, dare to think all these are certainly unhelpful for us to succeed. In a word, "more" does not necessarily result in "better", provided that the former is not on the right track.

In my point of view, Ricky is encouraging us not to think about, but to think of something. Throughout the process, imagining something unprecedented is what Ricky eager to challenge us. Inventing callback service, self-building the fiber network, building a new Free TV brand are all those real examples that Ricky showed us how one can be an imaginative pioneer.

Furthermore, some of us can be as imaginative as Ricky, but only very few of us can be a founder of a billion-revenue-generating company. As Ricky mentioned in his book, many of his friends working in the telecom industry claimed they knew callback long before Ricky, but they turned out to do nothing on it. I guess most of them have been working hard in this industry. Yet, they just dare to do thing within boundary. Their "do" is merely justified by its process. "Do it diligently" and "do not get it wrong" are the only guidance for their works.

"Dare to execute" is so much different from this. This kind of execution is driven by a direction, perhaps from your imagination, and more importantly, the end result. You may not have to work very hard or you may get something wrong, but so long as your result is significant, you are executing well enough.

What's next after imagination and execution? Success? Probably not! The answer should be "Failure". No successful person would experience any failure throughout their life. The one who

never fails is the one who only does nothing. Ricky did fail when he first launched the Pay TV. He also faced lots of frustration during the construction of our fiber network. Nevertheless, he gradually managed to get it done because he always focused on opportunities instead of restrictions. The crux of learning from the failure and turning it into success is persistence and strong will power. That is why our company always emphasizes our core value in term of “continuously strive for the best”.

In addition to persistence, another key element is endurance. Imagination could come with sneer. Strong execution could also come with strong opposition. You have to face a deluge of pressure if you truly “dare to imagine” and “dare to execute”. Many people questioned Ricky on his decision in directly fighting against the incumbent and self-building the “impossible” fiber network. The most challenging task is to withstand the pressure and motivate the staff to implement your idea with heart. Certainly at some points you have to let them go even though they are capable but not keeping abreast with your action.

After the reading, I ask myself, “Dare I to imagine and execute?” I suppose I am relatively more willing to think outside the box, perhaps owing to my personality and age. However, strong execution is what I have to make an effort to achieve in the future because at this moment only a few of my imaginations would turn out to be realized. I told myself, “having this principle as guidance, preparing to face numerous obstacles, with persistence, I would be more willing to imagine and execute than Ricky!”

04. Getting More – How to Achieve Your Goals in the Real World by Wharton Professor Stuart Diamond

<http://www.gettingmore.com/2011/01/getting-more-google/>

Aug 2011

For negotiation skills, I suppose the practical use for me in short term is how to win a contract from our non-existing customers as a telesales next week in GZ. In the preparation of the new sales kit, we endeavor to include all the strengths of HKBN, like how high the speed is, how stable the connection is, or how many awards we have got in recent years. These factual stuff are certainly crucial to increase the persuasiveness of our argument, but Prof emphasized that, “Perception and emotions” are much more important than “Power and Logic”, which I found we may easily fall into a fallacy that “We are great”= “You are helped”. In this regard, as a telesales, it would be better for us to make use of our strengths to address more on their concerns than praising our own achievements alone.

Besides, “Perception and emotions”, as suggested by Prof, are very personal and individual. To succeed in a negotiation, it would be better for us to perceive what they perceive and feel what they feel. Then I ask myself, “In addition to price, speed and stability these kinds of fact, in what aspects will I get good perceptions from an ISP and how will I “feel” better?

From my experience last week, when a PCCW technician came to my home to install its 1G service, my main concern is not whether PCCW can really offer me 1000m, because basically I have trust on its brand, what really bothers me is my time cost. They told me I can only choose “1pm -6pm” this period for 1G installation. I feel frustrated because waiting them at home within this period means I cannot have any appointment on the whole day because if they came at 6, plus a few hours of installation, my whole Saturday will have to be reserved. I feel really bad about this. When it comes to HKBN, do we have differences? From my CRE experience, after our customers have chosen a 2 hours period like 2-4 pm on one day, the CPE will make a call to the customer around 1-2 hours before they really visit them. It is better when comparing to PCCW. But can we still have improvement on this issue, say we can guarantee we must come within this period otherwise we will compensate you, or we can confirm their time one day before? I do feel this is an emotional payment to our customers and they will perceive us better.

In a word, people know the upside of using our services most of the time because seldom would we say “NO” to a faster broadband, but what may hinder us are the drawbacks that would be aroused. Thus, I will certainly feel better if the ISP did show much effort to alleviate

my concerns. Having this mindset, can we have more inspirational ideas on how to improve our services?

05. Execution – Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan

Sep 2011

There are so many practical usages you can find in this book of how to get things successfully done. In the first part, I would like to extract some of the most enlightening points to share. In the second part, I am also eager to write down some key points after my own discretion and for future reference.

“Leading for execution is not about micro-managing, or being “hands-on,” or disempowering people. Rather, it’s about active involvement – doing the things leaders should be doing in the first place.”

A leader who is good at execution should immerse themselves in some of the key details of the business and make good uses of his expertise to constantly probe and question. The logic is simple. Without appropriate questions to inspire and urge people to go exceed their limits, all your knowledge is merely yours. Also, without professionalism, keep asking questions will only demonstrate how ignorant you are and all the questions will go in vain eventually. In my point of view, “doing in the first place” means you must at least possess the key knowledge of how the operation runs and demonstrate how things can be done better. With this credibility, “active involvements” is all about asking smart questions.

As a management trainee, what I am now making an effort is to build up my professionalism in Telecommunication marketing by reading, observation and hands-on experience, which I believe gradually I will be well equipped. Yet, to learn how to ask smart questions really need some real leadership experiences and learn from mistakes painstakingly. Despite this, I do believe that I can still learn faster when I dare to make more acceptable mistakes.

“ When I see companies that don’t execute, the chances are that they don’t measure, don’t reward, and don’t promote people who know how to get things done”

From the examples discussed in the book, it seems that people, even genius leaders, tend to put more focus on something conceptual and directional, without much emphasis on people, or more specifically, the people system. As mentioned, on many occasions, losing company is attributed not to its wrong marketing campaign or inappropriate directions from the top management, but to a significant group of idle staff.

In our company, I did realize that we are eager to measure and reward our talents by jointly

setting the KPIs and having Internal Audit to keep checking. This measure could really enhance the productivity and efficiency at our workplace. Nevertheless, simply by looking at the KPIs may not be sufficient to measure one's contribution. Regular personal coaching and face-to-face examining from heads of department to our frontlines, especially to the experienced, should be reinforced in our company, so as to alleviate the discontents and therefore increase the morale of our talents.

“ You surely have noticed that the best leader is often not the most brilliant person in the outfit, or the one who knows most about the business.....This man was smart and pleasant to people, and he knew the business. But he didn't have emotional fortitude”

It is an indisputable fact that leaders with good execution must be able to assign right people to the right place in order to maximize the outputs. During the process, terminating improper staff seems inevitable and essential. Only with the capable talents having the same goal could a company be built with all the staff.

With regard to this issue, somehow I do suspect I would be likely to suffer from lacking in this “emotional fortitude” to lay off people. From my past experience as a leader, it is rather easy for me to get along well with others and motivate them by personal encouragement, but I find out that this advantage may turn out to be my disadvantage when I am obsessed with a good relationship instead of a result-oriented environment. I know that what I have to work hard is not to forfeit what I am capable of but to strike a proper balance between them. Having a clear guidance and talent policy, say everyone knows I must fire the bottom 5%, may be a good way out for me in this connection.

Other key points:

1. Understand your business by all means and as much as possible
 - Keep meeting with your staffs personally
 - Walk around and ask
2. Create the Framework for cultural change
 - Form working groups to list out problems, how to address them and let them resolve the problems on a competitive basis → WIT with heads of department as group members
3. Assess and promote people by not only his KPIs but also others' comments
 - Ask his colleagues about his personality and relationship with others

4. Let people go but with self-esteem

- Admit that you also made a mistake in hiring him
- Compensate him properly

5. Force people to think and discuss during meetings and let people do what they said in the meeting

- People are more willing to and responsible when doing their own suggestions

6. Let your secretary write minutes for you and make sure all of your staff follow it tightly

- Keep track of the milestones and review it regularly
- Change the plan when necessary

External Exposure

01. Business Leader Essential Generic Facilitation Skills Workshop

1 Jun 2011

This workshop aims at providing the audiences with crucial techniques on holding Seminar, meetings, or workshops. In the first part of the workshop, the skills provided were, in my point of view, too general because what he mentioned was basically what we could think of even though we were not prepared. Examples were like “makes your presentation interactive”, “keeps asking questions”, “and uses more flip charts” and so on.

What inspired me most was the second part of the workshop. The speaker tried to play a “game” called “Merry-Go-Round”. In the beginning, we were divided into four groups. He had also prepared 5 questions, with each written on a separate paper. Then, our group was responsible for writing down our answers under a tight time constraint. In just a few minutes, we were required to rotate to another question and paper. After every group answering all 5 questions, we would then work on an individual basis and vote for the best 5 answers in every paper.

A very simple game but I did find something interesting and meaningful.

The questions were common but essential like “What makes an effective presenter?” or “What are expected in a good workshop?” By attending this workshop, every participant was looking forward to having the answers. Nevertheless, instead of presenting us with a prepared PowerPoint slides, we were encouraged to seek the answers on our own in a form of “competition” which urged all the participants to work harder and think more. Besides, we were boosted to give out what we could think of within a tight time limit. This truly made the game more interesting.

The inspiring point was not only about how to encourage us to think but also about how to encourage us to review all the materials wholeheartedly. The speaker would have simply told us what other groups had written down and which one was more important, yet he tried to use another way by “cheating” us to vote for the best 5 answers. In his debriefing, he mentioned that the voting result was not the most important part. Forcing us to deliberately studied and examined all the answers through the “voting” was more constructive in this regard. Of course, we could also have more understandings on how people, especially senior managers (the participants), prioritize the importance of all the answer based on the voting result.

All in all, I was amazed by the accuracy of the speaker on capturing the psychological mindset of all the participants. By imposing competitions, time limit and a voting in one game, we could learn all the materials naturally but effectively. I do think this experience will certainly help improve my soft skills in holding a seminar or meeting in the future.

02. EMBA Alumni Event

3 Jun 2011

Many reflections indeed but I hope I can keep it short and to-the-point.

1. Communication skills

I made an effort to approach strangers actively but I could not say the result was excellent because it was quite difficult for me to blend into their topics and caught their attentions.

I am thinking maybe I could direct the topics to what I am familiar with in an indirect way.

For examples, “actually I am just a new MT but after a few days I can really feel how intense the competition is in the telecom market because a price war is just happening..” With this approach, on one hand, dead-air can be avoided. On the other hand, maybe some business opportunities can be sought. But of course, “not so aggressive and be natural” is what I am pursuing of.

2. Presentation skills

There were three speakers on that day, with different styles.

Speaker A spoke a lot. Some related to the question but some were obviously not.

Speaker B did not speak very fluent English and his accent was very much Cantonese, but his points were inspiring, related to the questions and direct.

Speaker C spoke rather fluent English with comparatively good presentation skill, but again his arguments were just common.

In the end, Speaker B stood out to be the one who made most audiences pay attention to. This reminded me of the importance of concrete content over mere presentation skills.

3. Key to success

I was so glad that one of the event coordinators sat next to me in the dinner, providing me with the chance to know more about Kellogg.

“What are the major reasons for this EMBA program to grow from nobody to No. 1 within such a short period of time?” I asked.

“This EMBA program was the first mover in joint education program under the wave of globalization. This act led the education industry to follow and Kellogg has remained the leader position in this field.” He answered.

Our company is also the same case—from nothing to a broadband leader. What inspired me is whether our company can learn from the success of Kellogg by implementing joint venture with mainland enterprise in order to develop business in China. I know there must be many considerations for this, but I guess eventually this will be inevitable for us to enter China when the local market is full. So the only thing left is how to cope with the challenges and turn them into opportunities.

03. Corporate Day of Credit Suisse

5 Jul 2011

This is the first time I am offered the opportunity to meet with our potential investors and external financial analysts. To prepare for this meeting, I made an effort to study the recent annual reports of our company as well as the incumbent, with a view to equipping myself with more knowledge in Telecommunication market and thus contributing in the meetings. Apart from this, I had also studied the material written by the analysts and the company background of the investors. As such, before the meeting, I did think I was quite well-prepared.

Nevertheless, the reality is.....

1. Please provide the key figure quickly, confidently and accurately!

The most common question the potential investors and analysts will raise is concerned with the key figure of our company, such as the growth of our subscribers, EBITDA, FCF, market share, our forecast, etc. In fact, I knew most of the answers and I had 90% confidence that my answers would be correct. Yet, I dare not to respond simply because it is 90% confidence, but not 100%. Also, I may take a while to load the figure, which to a large extent hindered me from answering these questions proactively and briskly.

Indeed, homework is done but yet to be well utilized.

In this regard, after the meeting, I key in all the numerical data used in the meeting and I promise myself I will be an expert on them next time.

2. Please turn your disadvantages into opportunities!

With strong confidence, appealing presentation skills, good use of metaphor and rather long experience in this field, our CFO, NiQ, is truly an impressive presenter. If I were the potential investor, I would be keen on listening to and chatting with NiQ, rather than a fresh youngster called Mingo. As a result, I got rather frustrated in the first round.

“What can I contribute?” I asked myself.

As mentioned above, numerical data is not my advantage at the time being. Besides, it is apparently unwise for me to talk about the history of the incumbent because the potential investors may be even better than me. It is also not sensible for me to foresee the future of

HKBN because it is basically not convincing to any investors.

“How can I arouse the potential investors’ interest by my past experience? I am still too young.....”

“Oh! That’s it! My young experience!”

Just because I am young, I can represent the youngsters to acknowledge the importance of broadband speed and show them the reasons. Just because I am young, I can share my hands-on experience on the frontline and tell them how the mass perceive other companies. Just because I am young, I can describe how much resources they have put for the MT program and the Talent culture in our company. As a matter of fact, in the second and the third round of meeting, I am capable of speaking more and more by mentioning my attachment in CRA and my user experience on Internet, arguably with appreciations from my audiences.

Weaknesses of mine are obvious. What I should try hard is to turn it into my weapons.

3. Please be long-sighted and credible!

A normal salesman may be used to emphasizing the merits of the products while hiding the demerits. They can gain much because many transactions are one-off and they are still telling part of the truth; however, as a businessman, long term credibility is of utmost importance.

As a listed company, hardly could we deny that more investments are desirable. For achieving this goal, we could have merely mentioned the opportunities of our company development while neglecting the challenges, especially when the potential investors are not some experts in telecommunication industry. Short-term investments may be gained at the expense of the long-term credibility.

I am not saying that we should not speak on our side. We want investments after all. What I learn from NiQ is to frankly speak on our challenges but also tell them why we are confident to cope with them. In my point of view, this is certainly a balance-striking approach to win trusts as well as large investments.

04. HR conference – HR Trends and Compliance Strategies by HR Magazine

13 Jul 2011

Insights in management

As a potential CXO in the future, I am always eager to learn from others' management styles. It was suggested that there is no perfect style but the one which suits you the most. Nevertheless, generally speaking, collar and cuff (LEADER in Chinese word) are two elements that no leaders can neglect.

Collar is the upper part of a suit, meaning that leaders should set a good role model for his staffs. Only when the leader could introduce convincing principles and implement disciplinary measures with high authority could a company operate with efficiency.

In this regard, how to build up authority is an essential issue to me because I suppose I am not the leader who can be very fearsome by nature owing to my personality; however, what I can strive is to enforce myself and all my colleagues to comply with the rules strictly, so as to enhance the authority of the rules instead of me.

Cuff is the lower part, implying the importance of flexibility and caring. The speaker did not mention much about how to strike a proper balance between discipline and caring, but I can think of three ways:

- 1) Strict on business and compliances, but show your considerations on some private matters
e.g. concern about their aspiration or relationship
- 2) Provide channels for them to voice out and listen with heart
- 3) Amend unnecessary rules and include flexibility within the rules

Benchmarking others' presentation

One of the speakers on that day demonstrated how good storytelling should be. The story he told was interesting, not too long and inspiring. More importantly, the ending of the story was surprising but sensible. Everyone would remember and "WOW" as a result. Also, with several "important" pauses, he could really capture people's attention and induce them to listen and think.

One difference next time

In my presentation, I tried to include my job-seeking story. When I compare my story with his, there is much room for improvements:

Not too long? Yes!

Interesting? Perhaps!

Inspiring? Not really!

Enough pauses? No. I spoke quite fast.

Surprising? Absolutely not!

If I can merely choose one point to improve next time, I will try my best to tell a better story by answering “YES!” to all the above questions.