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Dear Reader,

When it rains it really pours, and even though it's still a few weeks to the start of the Monsoon season, it appears to have begun raining cats and dogs on the economic front, with the ship of state buffeted by seemingly gale force winds that refuse to subside. In conditions like these, as the old saying goes, when the going gets tough the tough get going, and not to greener pastures elsewhere in the world, but to action stations right here at home where the battle rages. Leadership is at an all-time premium in times of trouble, and it's no coincidence that Octara assembled its finest crew for a one day crash course aimed at transforming peace time managers into war time leaders, for make no mistake, this is war of the asymmetrical, hybrid 5th generation kind, and there's a lot at stake.

Crisp and clear communication is of the essence in the achievement of peak performance, and our worthy Octara associate Kanwal Akhtar addressed the written aspect of communication in a well-attended workshop, and made an observation most profound when she said "Writing is thinking. To write well is to think clearly. That's why it's so hard." Clarity of thoughts is paramount, with vague notions gaining equally vague expression.

Also in this issue is a dispatch from our international Octara associate Tommy Weir who has penned his thoughts on Real Leaders or Leader-in-name only. On the issue of managing difficult employees Stacey Dennis has expressed her views.

You may also read a blog on Generation Z: Adapting to a "mobile-first" generation by Ali Janjua. The blog is available at <https://www.readyeducation.com/learn/generation-z>

That's about it for this issue of octara.com which now comes to you more frequently in its new digital format of which I hope you approve.

Feedback: info@octara.com

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Octara Training Calendar

June - July 2019



Aisha Bela
Enhancing Peak Performance
21-June - Karachi



Zaufyshan
Presentation Skills
25-June - Karachi



Ahmed Zafar
Build a Winning Strategy
27-June - Karachi



Dr. Frank
Social Media Marketing Tactics
3-July - Karachi

Dr. Frank
Digital Transformation for HR People
4-July - Karachi



Ali Saeed
Financial Modeling & Business Valuation
17-18 July - Karachi



Asad Rezzvi
Leading Through Disruption
23-July - Karachi
An Exclusive Course for C-Level Executives



Haseeb Hasan
Essential Supervisory Skills
24-July - Karachi



Catherine Bentley
Win Customers through Effective Communication
25-July - Karachi



DEALING WITH VUCA TRANSFORMING MANAGERS INTO LEADERS



CAN WE RUMBLE IN THIS JUNGLE?

Octara unfurled a high energy, fast track Seminar on an issue that dominates our times, that of leadership at various tiers of both business and society in a day and age characterized by fast moving events, like a flurry of jabs and hooks that sting like a bee in the absence of the ability to float like a butterfly, in an ultra-agile landscape best described by the acronym VUCA – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. WOW.

Disrupt or be disrupted; reinvent or be outmoded and cast out. It's a tough neighborhood and getting tougher with each passing day. Can we rumble in this jungle? That

is the million dollar question dominating the discourse across the board, and not just in Pakistan.

ADDRESSING WOEFULLY INADEQUATE LEADERSHIP POOL

To deliver this highly relevant and timely broadside to a corporate audience looking for ways and means to improve their lot and reach their leadership potential were four heavyweight Octara Associates, each a guru in her or his own right seized with a burning desire to see Pakistan get ahead in the global village, and cognizant of the fact that the only thing holding us back was our woefully inadequate leadership pool.

Five back-to-back sessions of one hour each brought the expectant audience face to face with Dr. S.A.Rab on 'Discovering the Leader in You'; Kanwal Akhtar on 'Communication'; Aisha Bela on 'Team Integration'; Asad Rezzvi on 'Leadership in Action'; and Kamran Rizvi on 'Leadership for the Future'.

These five Pakistani thought leaders took apart and put together again the leadership paradigm much like a commando in the field disassembles and reassembles his weapon blindfolded. Identify, acquire and deploy key behaviors necessary to become a leader; Understand the role of a leader in internal and external relationships and the importance of personal and organizational communication; Move from management to leadership using behavioral skills; Build an effective team based on authentic leadership; Coach, develop and motivate the team; Deliver superior results through effective delegation; and, Become more personally effective as a manager cum leader.

The workshop was designed to benefit Front Line Managers, Supervisors, Team Leaders, Emerging Managers, Executive Officers, New & Prospective Managers and all high potential mid care professionals expected to advance to Leadership positions.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT

Octara Associate Dr. S.A. Rab opened proceedings with the recommendation to recruit more neurons and boost the thinking power of the organization. "You need people who think for themselves and are not leader dependent. Employee engagement & performance enhancement are the top `2` leadership challenges across the planet, and the key to unleashing the tremendous leadership potentials in teams lies in changing the way they think . We need to ensure that leaders don't think for teams as they are always too happy to reverse delegate the task they get paid for. The secret lies in a leaders' ability to unstrap employee's metacognition, the employees' ability to think about their thinking."

Leaders who are able to nudge, coax and excite the synaptic pathways, our cognitive, thinking circuits in the brain, are blessed with skills to unleash the tremendous innovation and creative problem solving energy of it staff, says Dr. Rab.

"This is because each decision made is a synaptic path established. Self- discovered and developed synaptic

pathways lead to explosive energy that gives unstoppable momentum to organizations to grow with sustainability through some of the most turbulent times."

LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP

Next up was Octara Associate Kanwal Akhtar, senior consultant, corporate trainer, keynote speaker and visiting faculty member for Executive MBA and BBA programs at the IBA. She addressed the art of communication and its role in transforming a manager to a leader, calling it the language of leadership.

Kanwal elaborated on the difference between high context and low context communication cultures; with high context carrying the message in its context while low context had the message in the words. Similarly, in high context the message was subject to interpretation, could have more than one meaning and the listener was responsible for understanding it. In low context the message was direct, carried just one meaning and the speaker was responsible for understanding it.

"A successful leader is a successful communicator," she said. "He or she not only engages the minds but also engages the hearts of people."

BIRBAL AND THE NAURATANS

Aisha Bela Malik, owner of ABM Training, took up the hour before lunch and was all about team integration that unleashes the potential of each team member in achieving the collective objective. She alluded to Emperor Akbar's grand court and its adornment with authentic leadership that attracted Birbal and the Nauratans present in Akbar's court. Can you find the Akbar in you that will attract the Birbals and Nauratans to your team, allowing you to relax with the full knowledge that your business is at 'full speed ahead' on autopilot!

"Unfortunately, in our context it remains wishful thinking because people in authority are insecure and unable to delegate effectively, centralizing power in their own hands."

Aisha has a Master's degree in English Literature and a PhD in Philosophy of Leadership. She is visiting faculty at IBA teaching managerial communications, and is the Chairperson of the FPCCI Standing Committee on Education, Women & Development and was instrumental in framing the National Women Business Agenda. Aisha is also the District Chair for Literature & Poetry Rotary



District 3271 for Balochistan & Sindh, and teaches women traditional yoga.

AGILE VERSUS PYRAMID ORGANIZATIONS

session, a challenging slot for any trainer to operate in given the sleep inducing virtues of lunch, and dwelt delightfully enough upon Leadership in action, focusing on the kind of leadership required to lead an agile organization. "The

majority of the organizations in the world are pyramid structured within which are incremental leaders who own the process making it very silo'd, bureaucratic and ego driven," he said.

"In agile organizations one sees exponential leadership that is focused on enabling teamwork and solving problems, and not on their titles and ranks. That's the imperative for today's world. The economy of Pakistan is

changing extremely rapidly and there's a huge amount of unpredictability that has become part of the business landscape."

Asad Rezzvi has a degree in Psychology from Berkley and has worked closely for over 10 years with turnaround Anthony Robins, considered by Harvard University and others as one of the top business engineers in the world today.

"Speed is of the essence here, and agile organizations are the ones that get ahead given the economic conditions we have today, and beat the traditional pyramid organizations by a factor of 10 at least if not by a factor of 100."

THE FUTURE IS NOW!

Octara Associate Kamran Rizvi is senior consultant at Carnelian, founding director at Navitus and the School of Leadership, who founded KZR Associates in 1991 and pioneered the self-improvement and organizational development movement in Pakistan. He zeroed in on 'Leadership for the future', describing the seminar as an exciting journey truly designed for the ambitious, and espousing a fair bit of profundity when he said the future will come when it comes, it's what you do today that makes a difference.

"Future is, and has always been, uncertain. No one can ever say with certainty what will happen in the future. So how can we begin to lead for the future? When thinking of our immediate and long term future, we need to add increasing complexity, volatility, and ambiguity to the mix. This simply adds to the challenge. And it is in turbulent times such as these, that the value of our personal, business and collaborative leadership comes to the fore."

He said what leaders can do in such a dynamic context is to provide clarity, instead of certainty, to their

constituents - clarity of expectations, clarity of vision and clarity of things we can do each day to come closer to our aspired future.

"The journey into the future is led effectively when we keep death in mind. Death is the only certainty in the future that we know of.

Yet it is uncertain in terms of when it will come. Hence effective and inspiring leaders are powered by their beliefs, dreams and ideals, which they share widely and frequently to gain commitment of everyone in the system to the cause. The aim is achieved when everyone in the organization makes the mission their own."

"Leadership for the future demands that we build succession - a leadership pipeline, so that the show goes on long after we're gone. All this becomes possible when we genuinely work each day we have with the intent to develop others to take our place, and this spirit permeates at every level in our institutions. Only a generous heart, imbued with humility, conviction and visionary leadership can turn the trauma of uncertainty into a delightful adventure for all."

ALL CHIEFS, NO INDIANS!

Some say that Pakistan's problem is not a lack of leadership but its exact opposite, its superabundance to the point of disorder and chaos. While we can never have enough of authentic leadership that is value driven, embodied in the likes of Sattar Edhi, Ruth Pfau and Adib Rizvi, it is the scourge of ill-intentioned positional leadership that has laid low the country's governance systems and yielded appalling levels of poverty of both ideas and resources in the service of the nation. All of that is now being rectified across the board in the private, public and government sectors ■

Report filed by **Adil Ahmad**, Correspondent, octara.com



MAJORITY OF COMPANIES TODAY DO NOT SPEND THE TIME AND EFFORT FOR LEADERS TO PRACTICE BECOMING LEADERS

A conversation with Dr. Tommy Weir on the basics of building leadership capabilities for sustainability

Companies across the world have realized that identifying and developing leaders will drive superior performance. Does the process of leadership identification and development go beyond performance to become a matter of sustainability and survival?

Dr. Tommy: Many organizations misunderstand the difference between having people in leadership positions (like Vice-President or CEO) as opposed to having 'leaders' fill these positions. Unfortunately, there are many LINO's (leaders in name or position only) occupying those positions and that does not lead to sustainability. In emerging economies, the danger of this situation is even higher because business performance is showing YOY growth, mostly due to a fast growing environment and not necessarily driven by the leaders in the organization.

Everybody is in a job and seems to be doing exceptionally well. The problem arises when the economic situations change, business pipelines dry out and those leaders are neither able to achieve performance nor run the business. Majority of companies today do not spend the time and effort for leaders to practice becoming leaders. There are two main dangers to sustainability. First danger is

when companies grow beyond their financial capabilities and second, when they grow beyond their leadership capabilities. And according to me, both are equally important situations.

How is this situation different for emerging markets? What is the uniqueness of emerging economies when it comes to identifying and managing talent effectively?

Dr. Tommy: The concept of a leader, by definition, comes from the basic framework of leading people. A leader can only lead people and not customers, systems or processes; the process of leading only applies to people. In this context, it is very important for leaders to understand the nature of people they are leading. In India, a lot of youth from the agricultural background are beginning to join the corporate world. These are the people who have grown up in an environment with limited exposure to the corporate world as it is today. The leaders in these organizations however are mostly highly educated people with highly exposed backgrounds who have studied or worked abroad and are used to the corporate environment from previous generations. The success or failure of these

leaders will lie in their understanding of the people they are leading, considering the kind of diversity which exists among them.

Is investment in Leadership correlated to successful performance in the short term, or is it an investment of mid/long term?

Dr. Tommy: Good leaders are able to achieve short term business performance as their leadership capabilities can extract performance from employees. In the long term, however, leadership brings the capabilities to be able to grow a business. Investment in leadership in the short term will bring higher performance per employee and in the long term, will bring sustainable growth as the organization will have the internal capabilities to take the business ahead.

In many organizations, especially those with less number of employees, the exercise of identifying and grooming leaders happens because of the CEO or Top Management having an intuitive eye to spot unique capabilities. In a fast growing scenario, this is of course not a sustainable model. How can these organizations design and plan for leadership development processes?

Dr. Tommy: There are several issues with CEO and Top Management exclusively owning the identification of talent, the main one being that their exposure to people is limited to those working around them. It is essential for them to identify that and include other managers down the line in this process. In order to create successful leadership, a company needs to first identify what capabilities they require in a leader and what competencies are required to drive the business. Then these capabilities need to be adapted to each level in the organization and finally should be exercised consistently by linking these competencies across processes. However, the first step remains to create the framework and then actually using this framework across processes and functions, like recruitment, career development, recognition, compensation, et al, take place.

In terms of tracking effectiveness, I think it is important to create assessment mechanism either internally or externally. Especially in high growing environments, it is very easy to let the speed of business take over the implementation and use of these frameworks. Very few business heads stop and assess their processes as a way to validate the effectiveness of their frameworks.

You would agree that all organizations across size and industries need to invest in identifying and developing leadership in a systematic manner. How can one do this when the resources are limited? Is a large budget a requirement for a successful process? What alternatives mid-size organizations have?

Dr. Tommy: The process of identifying and developing leaders does not necessarily require a budget, and as I mentioned earlier, it requires a clear framework of the competencies & behaviours we are looking for, and a consistent use of that framework across practices & across levels in the organization. For example, business leaders just need to identify what they require for their business to succeed and the process is simple after that. They can use models like MAWL (model, assist, watch and leave) that do not require any budgets. In the MAWL framework, the leader basically spends time with the mentee so he/she can see and learn from observing behaviours and decisions (model), then creates opportunities for the mentee to help and give his/her inputs in the matters handled (assist), creates opportunities for the mentee to take action under the supervision of the mentor (watch) and finally creates the base for the leader to exit when



the mentee is ready for the leadership position (leave). In emerging markets like India where culture is more patriarchic, these models work very well because employees look out for their managers and managers also look beyond the quarter results to invest in the growth of the organization and society.

Sources: <https://www.peoplematters.in/article/leadership/real-leaders-or-leaders-in-name-only-397>



Dr. Tommy Weir, PhD. is Founder & CEO of EMLC. He is a thought leader specializing in strategic leadership for fast-growth and emerging markets, a gifted speaker, and author of The CEO Shift - a book that explores the new global business environment and challenges corporate leaders to shift their practices in order to survive in the new economy. He is exclusively working with Octara since 2015 for his workshops in Pakistan.

*Writing is thinking.
To write well is to think clearly.
That's why it's so hard.*

Kanwal Akhtar holds forth on email writing skills

Communicate clearly and confidently

About four out of five business professionals admit that they are not able to draft persuasive and polite emails because of a lack of proper business writing skills, says Kanwal Akhtar, senior consultant, corporate trainer, keynote speaker and visiting faculty member for Executive MBA and BBA programs at the IBA.

Kanwal conducted a half-day Octara workshop and coaching session on fast and effective ways to acquire essential writing skills by business professionals that would enable them to communicate clearly and confidently through emails.

The program covered how to organize thoughts, get off to a quick start and then communicate persuasively in any scenario that required communication to be established in the form of an email.

Demolishing myths

Kanwal quoted Jeff Goins, author of “You Are a Writer (So Start Acting Like One)” and creator of TribeWriters in emphasizing a no doubt common dilemma faced by every office-goer.

“Do you know what’s really at work when we thrash around with countless emails and projects, never finishing any of them? FEAR.”



FEAR, in the words of another management guru, stands for False Evidence Appearing Real, and towards this end Kanwal lists some popular myths in need of dispelling, like Email writing is easy for people with in-born talent for writing (false); I am not comfortable with English and hence I cannot write emails (false); The richer your vocabulary, the better your emails are (false); Short sentences show that you can't write emails properly (false); You should write the way you talk in your emails (false); There's no such thing as a 'Writer's block' for corporate professionals (definitely false!).

3 by 3 process & dwindling attention spans

Kanwal drove home the 3 by 3 process for email writing – Identify Purpose; Envision Reader; Brainstorm; Adapt and Organize Message; Prepare First Draft; Revise and



Proofread. She drew attention to dwindling attention spans that have gone down from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2013 while a goldfish is rated at 9 seconds. In 2019 what could it be? And could we be looking at nanoseconds in the future?

One-on-one guidance

The workshop also included coaching sessions that enabled participants to get some one-on-one guidance on how to streamline their business writing in various kinds of emails, make a persuasive point, while maintaining courtesy and professionalism.

Bridging gaps, avoiding pitfalls

The emphasis was on structuring correct and powerful emails; Safeguarding emails from careless errors through proofreading; Saving time and money by avoiding misinterpretations, numerous edits, and miscommunication in emails; Applying the 'You Attitude' for well-communicated business writing; Brainstorming tricks and tactics for fast approaching email deadlines and overcoming the writer's block; The perfect subject line! How to give your email the right start: the salutation! Reading between the lines: visual considerations for emails; Ending the email effectively; Simple proofreading and editing tips for perfect business emails; Improving readability in emails: Cutting the length and wordiness using the "Altitude Test".

Proofreading - review and revise

Out of all of the above the touch point that stood out for me was shooting off emails without too much thought given to the impact on the receiver and its consequences. While spoken words are like writings in the sand that wither and vanish after a while, the written word is not so easily taken care of, becoming etched in stone, as it were. Writer's block is another issue that often needs tackling, generated by either a subconscious unwillingness to address a knotty issue, or by plain procrastination.

Short & sweet

Improving readability is important, and often time verbosity with a view to bulk up the email makes difficult getting to the heart of the matter. It's best to cut to the chase with clarity and not beat around the bush as if afraid of addressing the real issue.

Getting sharper & crisper

While emails still remain the mainstay of business and other communications, the new breed of executive hailing mostly from the Millennial generation is prone to harnessing social media, in particular WhatsApp, wherein communication is even sharper and more precise with a



superabundance of acronyms quite alien to conventional business communication but increasingly worming their way into the mainstream. The only way to keep abreast with the changing times is to make oneself open and available to new learning through regular training and retraining.

A penny for your thoughts!

Kanwal Akhtar ended her presentation with a profound piece of advice. "You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across your ideas won't get you anywhere."

Email writing process – CARP; YOU Attitude; email structure and elements; length matters – cover your topic then quit; flow logically and lead the reader from start to finish.

Salutations and sign offs.

Phase 3 – post-writing tools – readability – paragraphing and creating white spaces; altitude test – cut back on words; visual enhancement – appearance matters so make it visually appealing – working with fonts; proofreading – review and revise ■

Report filed by **Adil Ahmad**, Correspondent, octara.com



Kanwal Akhtar is a Senior Consultant and Learning Facilitator. She is working with Octara on Business Communication and Corporate Grooming & Etiquette Programs.

MANAGING DIFFICULT EMPLOYEES

by Stacey Dennis, Vistage International

**WHEN EMPLOYEES EXHIBIT NEGATIVE
WORKPLACE BEHAVIOURS, IT CAN DISTURB AN
ENTIRE ORGANISATION'S SUCCESS.**



*D*ifficult employees can reduce employee morale, put a halt on productivity and other employees' performance, create business losses, and even become a legal liability, if not handled correctly. So, how can you stay ahead of the curve and stop these employees from wreaking havoc on your business? Here's a list of the common types of disruptors, and ways you can improve your management style to handle tough employee situations.

1. THE OVERLY EMOTIONAL EMPLOYEE

Have you noticed an employee who has a tendency to raise their voice or slam doors when they're upset? This type of behaviour is not only unprofessional, but it can also create an uneasy atmosphere for other employees in your office.

When a tough conversation is needed with an overly emotional employee, start by explaining the issue. The focus

should be on the employee's behavior, not the person. Be sure to keep a cool head and remain professional. Your employees look to you to set the parameters of what type of behavior is acceptable.

2. THE BULLY

Are there employees who repeatedly participate in gossip, are overly critical, or even take credit for work that's not theirs? Or, is there a manager in your organization that uses bullying as a way of motivating their team to perform?

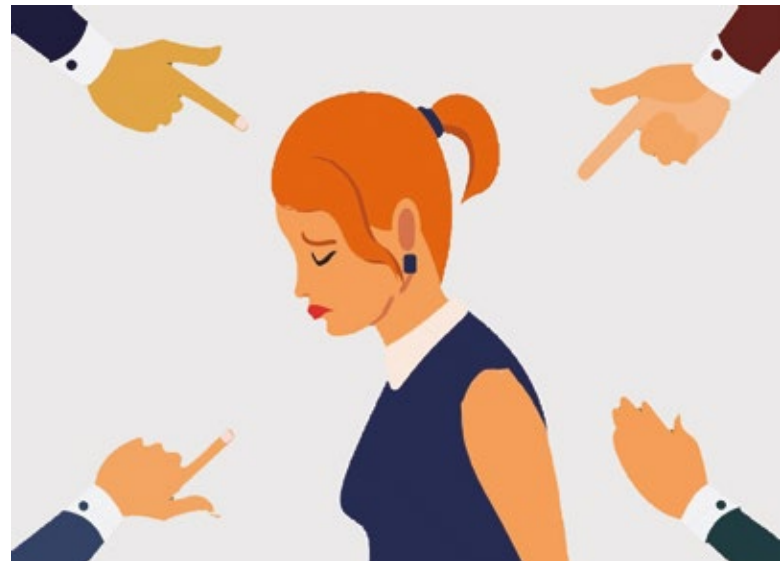
While you should never be quick to put someone in a category, it's critical to pay attention to employee behavior on an ongoing basis. If you notice a trend, it may be time to have a talk about their behavior. However, keep in mind that it's important to gather the facts from all sides. Listen carefully before rushing to any judgement. When it's time to have a talk, be as

direct as you possibly can. Have examples. Also, be sure to make mention of consequences if the employee does not make changes.

3. THE NAYSAYER

No one can be positive 100 percent of the time. Everyone has good days and bad days. That's just human. However, at times, there are employees who seem to have a dark cloud perpetually hanging over their head that rains on anyone they encounter. Before you rush to judgment, begin with some self-reflection. While you may think your difficult employee just has a bad attitude, sometimes the problem stems from the way they're being managed.

It's always a good idea to check your leadership style and consider whether your own actions might be contributing to their behavior. If you don't believe your leadership style is the root cause, start the coaching conversation by showing concern for the individual's wellbeing. Let them know that you noticed their negative attitude, and ask what you can do to help. From there, keep any coaching professional, specific and accurate. Always focus on the facts.



4. THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

It's normal for employees to want to socialize and talk to one another. However, when there aren't clear boundaries, excessive talkers can become disruptive to the whole team. Start by creating safe places and times for employees to chat. This could be a break room where employees can stop for coffee, or you may even want to plan social events or team get-togethers from time to time.

In open-floorplan environments, you can also create a system that allows employees to communicate politely when they're in need of quiet. For example, you could create signs that employees post for others to see when they don't want to be disrupted. If there's an employee who is still causing disruptions, or missing deadlines due to excessive socializing, it may be time to have a candid discussion.

Explain that they're spending too much time socializing and not enough time working. You might encourage this type of employee to channel their energy elsewhere by allowing them to plan any social outings for the group, like birthday celebrations or team-building exercises.

BE A STRONG LEADER

Your leadership role in managing difficult employees cannot be discounted. At the helm of your business, it's your responsibility to take notice if disruptive behaviors are preventing your organization from performing at its best. While having tough conversations is never easy, it can have a positive impact on your organization when executed with tact.

Sources: THE HELICOPTER BUSINESS by Roger Harrop (Vol. 15)