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Dear Reader,

Ramzan Mubarak! And may Allah bless us with the fortitude to fast and tread the right path, ameen. The long, hot summer is upon us and with it the trials and tribulations of living in a VUCA environment. But we have been hailed around the world as a resilient people, and will do better than survive these hardships, driven out of our comfort zones and indeed prospering against all odds, Inshallah.

This issue we bring you the story of a truly remarkable young lady, **Sarah Dawood**, whose accomplishments to-date are truly remarkable and would serve to inspire a closing of the gender-gap in the Pakistani workplace.

Our second lead is **Junaid Akhtar**, a corporate turnaround artist, whose take on the Servant Leadership style is a sure fire route to turning around faltering businesses, and taking those with zest to the next level and beyond. Junaid graced OCTARA and a select assembly on zoom in a one-hour crash course on effective leadership that requires reining-in our egos and narcissistic tendencies and embracing humility with an attitude of gratitude. Indeed.

We carry an instructive blog especially for trend watchers by **Henry Coutinho-Mason** titled Future Normal: Fast Forward #8.

During Ramzaan we have especial treats with "Islamic Wisdom for Today" featuring Islamic scholar **Abbas Husain** holding forth on three occasions - **Session 1:** Islam In Alignment With Modernity, **Session 2:** The Quran: What Is It? What Is In It? And **Session 3:** Spirituality In Three Traditions.

Also, Octara will be conducting Online Training: The Happiness Affair by **Sanam Fatima** and **Umair Jaliawala** will hold A Conversation on SUBMISSION: Being One! A loaded deck, like they say. Enjoy! ☺

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Octara Programs in April 2021

ISLAMIC WISDOM FOR TODAY WITH ABBAS HUSAIN - Islamic Scholar

April 19, 2021 | 11:00 am (PKT) via Zoom

Session 1: **Islam In Alignment With Modernity**

April 22, 2021 | 11:00 am (PKT) via Zoom

Session 2: **The Quran: What Is It? What Is In It?**

April 29, 2021 | 11:00 am (PKT) via Zoom

Session 3: **Spirituality In Three Traditions**

April 27, 2021 | 10:00 am - 1:00 pm (PKT) via Zoom

Online Training: The Happiness Affair

Facilitator: **Sanam Fatima**

Wednesday, April 28, 2021 | 3:30 pm at Regent Plaza, Karachi

A Conversation on SUBMISSION: Being One!

Facilitator: **Umair Jaliawala**

Octara Programs from (April - August 2021)

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SARAH DAWOOD

Corporate Warrior



Sarah works as **Deputy General Manager – Marcomms (KE)**, and styles herself as Marketing & Communications Specialist with over 10 years of working with known brands on the one hand, and daughter, wife, mother, and Counselor in training on the other, leading a very fulfilling life and most certainly a role model for all the aspiring young women in search of leaving their comfort zones and making a solid contribution to the nation.

octara.com had the privilege and pleasure of catching up with Sarah and getting an inspiring glimpse into her life and times.

Diversity & Inclusion

octara.com: Please describe a day in your life at work and what it is like working at KE?

Sarah: Whether I am at the office or working from home, a typical workday starts at 9 am when I grab a cup of coffee and fire up my laptop. I have a to-do list ready from the evening before with cut off times, so it's easy to keep track of my tasks for the day and not miss anything. With the exception of critical items, I leave for home on time, because that's where my next job starts!

It gives me much pride to say that KE is an excellent employer, a modern workplace, and a good environment for female employees. Our leadership emphasizes female participation within the organization, and there is a wonderful Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) team which creates new initiatives to empower

women. To name a few, there is a caregiver policy for women with young children, maternity and paternity leave, plus plans for a vitality program for expecting moms.

At one upcoming activity for female employees - I'm going to learn to ride a motorbike! I'm also a Lean In Circle Moderator - inspired by Sheryl Sandberg's "Lean In", the D&I team introduced Lean In Circles at KE as a mentoring and coaching platform for females.

Beyond the organization too, KE is pushing for a greater role of women in society to participate equally in all areas, especially within the Energy Sector.

Social Constructs and Cultural Conditioning

octara.com: From a gender perspective, how empowered do you feel?

Sarah: Before I talk about that, I want to share a broader perspective... Pakistan has been ranked among the worst four

countries in the world in gender parity, and according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021 Pakistan is featured among the bottom 10 countries in two of the four sub-indexes. So, if you ask me how empowered I feel generally? Not so much. Having lived, worked, and travelled abroad, and seeing how women in other societies and developing countries are empowered in daily life, Pakistan seems like a complicated and difficult place to be female (at any age).

Having said that, the corporate sector has come a long way, and I have seen this evolution firsthand in my decade or so within the industry. I feel this is where society must play a role; women in Pakistan carry a big load because of social constructs and cultural conditioning. Encouraging women to work is good, but how can this be backed up with enabling environments? The workforce (both genders) have to buy into the agenda to create equality and balance – that is perhaps one way to end fear of judgment or guilt when women are struggling and juggling to create and maintain a work-life balance.

TCS was a Game-Changer

octara.com: For a full year and a half you were the marketing lead for TCS E-Com dealing with UI/UX to Search to Social Media to Consumer Engagement, and so on for two e-commerce platforms www.yayvo.com and www.sentimentsexpress.com. How did you find that experience?

Sarah: TCS was a game-changer for me and I have fond memories. In Yayvo.com – (a never-been-done-before online shopping experience) I got to work with some of the most esteemed and talented professionals, in the logistics industry, as well as on the brand side and on the agency side.

With Sentiments Express, it was more than just creating fantastic e-commerce, it was about making an emotional connection between the brand and people from many walks of life. It was an utter joy to work with Mrs. Sadia Awan. She is a most graceful, kind, and talented woman.

When I started at TCS, I had a team of about four people. In a year we had created sophisticated in-house processes at E-Com for content, SEO, paid, organic, product photography, and so on.

Ever-Changing Tech

Tech has always been an area of interest and I keep myself updated because it's ever-changing. Before joining TCS at E-Com, I had worked on some fintech projects: brochure websites, developing and launching a real-time online stock trading product, backend front end credit card application with personalized photos, things like that... but the transformation of TCS Connect to Yayvo.com was the dream of any techie. My team and I worked closely with the IT team on Yayvo.com, and in parallel we worked together on launching SentimentsExpress.com – this was very interesting, we spent a lot of sleepless nights overcoming the challenges of migrating a

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“KE is an excellent employer, a modern workplace, and a good environment for female employees... At one upcoming activity for female employees - I'm going to learn to ride a motorbike! Women in Pakistan carry a big load because of social constructs and cultural conditioning”

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.NET site to a modern and dynamic UI/UX with SEO capability.

Dubai Beckons

From TCS E-Com I relocated to Dubai, as Head of Digital at YouExperience. At this Effie-winning agency I worked on digital and content strategy for 9 MENA markets, and for some of the most well-known and loved global consumer brands and FMCGs.

octara.com: Prior to TCS you were supervisor for internal communications with Philip Morris International. Did working for a cigarette company ever challenge your conscience?

Sarah: Philip Morris was my first time at a global MNC and a Fortune 500 company – it was an amazing learning curve! And to answer your question, I was working for a multinational tobacco company with its codes of compliance and ethics – the role in fact challenged me as a professional and provided me with perspective that enabled future growth. I also got a lot of cross-functional exposure at PMI. I was part of the Corporate Communications team, but I also got the opportunity to work on different projects with the Trade Marketing team, the Legal team, and the Regional Compliance team.

PMI also sent me for Communications, Media & PR trainings to Hong Kong and Switzerland. These were wonderful self-development opportunities and the learning are relevant and valuable to date.

“Slayer of the Mundane” Mentor for Life

octara.com: You spent 2 years as Account Director HeadLion and General Manager Café HeadLion. What was the concept behind Café HeadLion?

Sarah: HeadLion is like an Alma Mater for me, and Neil Christy “Slayer of the Mundane” is a Mentor for life. HeadLion gave me the opportunity to learn brand marketing during the day and the Café taught me stakeholder management by night. Neil's vision for Café HeadLion was to create a space to bring the marketing and advertising community together, to debate popular campaigns and famous brands. Neil created a completely digital strategy for Café HeadLion and some of those campaigns went viral - I'm talking about a time when Facebook was new and there was no concept of “only digital” campaigns,

that too completely organic.

“Diffusion of Innovation”

The Café soon became the talk of the town and a hub for likeminded people. We also managed several events there for the media and marketing fraternity. Café HeadLion led the way for people to adapt to new ways of thinking: looking at brands and the marketing of brands in a new way. It was a “Diffusion of Innovation”; Café HeadLion fostered, nurtured, and triggered creativity. KAMN is an example of that - KAMN is now the watchdog for the marketing industry and is playing a key role which was not the initial strategy.

octara.com: Lecole for Advanced Studies employed you as Art & Design Lecturer for 3 years (2007-2009) and you served for 2 years as Adjunct Faculty for the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture until a year ago. Is engaging with academia a future option, and is working for industry a win of the heart over the mind?

Sarah: A little bit of a backstory... I got my first corporate job when I pitched a freelance project to a local bank – I was offered the position of Asst. Brand Manager - the rest is history as they say. Before this life, I was a teacher.

I find passing on knowledge as fulfilling as receiving it. When my children started school, I started teaching at a preschool. Later I moved to higher classes and taught Art to grade 6 to O'Levels. My last fulltime teaching position was Art & Design Lecturer at Lecole for Advanced Studies, and more recently I was part of the visiting faculty at Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture to

“How did I manage all that? Hard work, focus, and whole lot of commitment!”

teach brand content and social media strategy courses under the Continuing Education Program (CEP). I look forward to more opportunities to teach and train younger professionals but I don't think I am ready for a trade-off just yet.

CPGA of 4.0! Straight 'A' student!

octara.com: At Miami Dade College (2010-2011) you studied Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services, Activities and Societies, finishing off with quite a flourish with a CPGA of 4.0! Straight 'A' student! How did you manage that with a loaded extracurricular agenda?

Sarah: I feel lucky to have been awarded the Fulbright grant sponsored by the US State Department to study at MDC. I was a student ambassador for Pakistan as well. The program allowed me the time to fully immerse myself in the experience and dedicate all my time to learning (academically and practically). There was a lot of openness there and a rich spirit of diversity, ways of life and doing things seemed to be designed to make life easy and fun. It's as if they understand that this is the best way

With students at Indus Valley

Miami Dade 10 countries Community College Initiative Program



KAMN group



With Olympian Hussain Shah



Internal Women's Day event



“

HeadLion is like an Alma Mater for me, and Neil Christy “Slayer of the Mundane” is a Mentor for life.

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one can learn, access their maximum potential, and grow.

I was also voted President of The International Club 2010 -2011 at Wolfson campus - MDC, and I wrote the "Opinions" column for "The Reporter" - the Miami Dade College newspaper, during my time in USA. I also represented MDC International students at the Miami Courthouse in 2011. How did I manage all that? Hard work, focus, and whole lot of commitment!

octara.com: You have also earned Certification CST-L3 from the Counseling & Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body – UK in a 1-year (2018 – 2019) Certification program to learn and apply basic counseling techniques, using three Humanist approaches and their impact on client work. What drove you in this direction?

Mental health is a passion project

Sarah: I believe “people” are (and should be) at the heart of everything we do as marketers, brand managers, professionals or even as consumer brands. Being a marketing and communications professional, I studied some Psychoanalysis and Consumer Psychology at college. I was interested to learn in more depth, so I began the CPCAB Certificate with this agenda.

However, after I finished the Certificate I felt so enriched in personal, interpersonal, and professional areas of my life that I decided to enroll for the Diploma and train formally.

I hope to complete my training this year and be able to work with women and children from underprivileged communities. Mental health is a passion project and very close to my heart - I feel that facilitating and enabling people to understand and manage their mental health can help our society prosper and grow immensely on many levels.

octara.com: There is a fair bit of volunteer work to your credit involving helping generate funds and working as a Volunteer for Project Awareness, the All-Nighter for Haiti Project, Light the Way (Breast Cancer Awareness), and many others. What would you say was your favourite?

Outreach International

Sarah: I enjoy volunteer work so much - it keeps me grounded and builds empathy. I wouldn't pick a favourite but the volunteer work I did with Outreach International hit an extra chord because it was for women and it was about breast cancer. Outreach International is a global nonprofit that supports local leaders and community-led groups who develop lasting solutions for poverty-related issues. My volunteer assignment was in Miami. It was organized by my college, and our group was trained

to create awareness about breast cancer as well as guide women of different ages on how to do self-exams as well as where they can get examined and which free of charge facilities are available close to their homes if they need information or treatment.

octara.com: What's the biggest challenge you have faced in your professional journey?

Home or Office?

Sarah: A big challenge has been (and is) to manage the expectation that as a woman I have to choose between my personal and professional growth – I can't pick one and I want both. I see that men are never expected to choose one or the other – home or office. For women, after office the home clock starts. It is different for men. There should be some sort of sensitivity training around this across the corporate sector. At times unconscious bias and workplace harassment have also been challenging.

octara.com: How do you unwind and de-stress?

Sarah: For me spending time at home is the best stress relief. Music is a must and a constant. In my spare time I also enjoy being creative with content for my personal social media profiles.

octara.com: Speaking of which, you have a 20k+ following on Twitter... how did that happen?

Sarah: My PR professor had given an extra credit assignment which involved creating a Twitter account and using it. That's how it started and then I really enjoyed the interactions and opinions. It's like having a conversation with the whole world at once. I also saw that people wanted to see more and more original opinions and content. I worked as a freelance micro-blogger for a few years too on many popular brand campaigns.

octara.com: What titles appear on your reading list?

Sarah: There are so many books I love and have read more than once! I enjoy fiction as well as non-fiction, also history. I recently read The Art of Asking by Amanda Palmer and Dibs in Search of Self by Virginia M. Axaline.

octara.com: What's your message to all the women out there trying to make it in a man's world?

Sarah: Work hard, keep growing and developing your skills. Help other women when you can - mentor, listen, support. I see a lot of women tearing other women down - that is not cool. I believe there is more than enough room for all of us to shine!

THANK YOU Ms. Sarah Dawood ■

(All opinions expressed are the personal opinions of Ms. Sarah Dawood)

Interview conducted by **Adil Ahmad**, Correspondent, **OCTARA.COM**

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The KHADIM is Back

Corporate Turnaround & Executive Coaching Professional



JUNAID AKHTAR holds forth on SERVANT LEADERSHIP

In 1990 - 92 as communications director Jamil Janjua was asked by the CEO Khalid Awan to address the large number of employee complaints and issues that had come to plague some parts of the TCS Network.

*"Our people didn't realize that we were in the service business and were employed to serve the customer" said **Jamil Janjua**, now the very hands-on CEO of OCTARA, his brainchild that has grown into the country's leading trainer of corporate human resource. "We did away with designations and made a generic designation of KHADIM. So I became Communications Khadim instead of Director, and Khalid Awan became Chief Khadim in place of CEO. The word Khadim, or servant, has unfortunately negative overtones in our culture. Later with Ramiz Allawala in 2003-04 we had come up with a program called servant leadership to follow up on the KHADIM initiative."*

Care & Growth

Then Etsko Schuitema, better known for some time now as Shaykh Ibrahim, whom OCTARA had the privilege of introducing to Pakistan, strenuously advocated his Care & Growth model which spoke essentially along the same lines. Now here was Junaid Akhtar mincing no words in his advocacy of curbing narcissistic trends and riding one's ego on a tight rein, calling a spade a spade and urging humility and an attitude of gratitude from the top down.

Based in Washington DC, Junaid Akhtar has over two decades of experience in leadership development and corporate turnaround, and is the recipient of the Transformer Award from General Motors – transformation from bankruptcy to profitability. Educated at Harvard Business School & Lawrence Tech, Junaid has diverse experience with global Fortune 500 firms in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific.

With the modern-day workforce diversity and the need for a work-life balance, major corporations of today are faced with the challenge of sustaining talent, profitability, and success.

Servant Leadership offers a proven way to overcome that roadblock when leaders and teams continue on the path of self-actualization. This webinar addressed the subject at a macro level and provided some insight based on experiential know-how acquired from a multitude of Fortune 500 firms.

How a servant leadership style can benefit your organization was the question Junaid posed?

Humility and Care

"When people feel valued, they strive to become their very best," he answered in reply to his question.

"Humility and care from leaders require efforts but foster long term success. Firms with servant leaders enjoy high talent retention and constantly outperform peers. Servant Leader builds higher levels of trust and employee engagement. Organizations exist to serve and leaders execute by serving teams and stakeholders."

Encouraged to attend the Zoominar were professionals in management cadre or at the threshold of joining it; technical executives within engineering, operations, and manufacturing; people leaders and anyone with a keen interest in self-actualization.

From Desired Success to Achieving Success

Junaid Akhtar works on a transitional mind moving from desired success to achieving success using the 7 Attributes Model as the tool for focusing on achieving success, and deep dive on the emotional intelligence attribute.

Who is a servant leader and why do we need him?

Inspiration, not Authority

"It's a leadership style through inspiration and not through authority. There's a negative, derogatory concept about this word servant in many cultures. It's not about weakness or the servant. It's not about being served. It's about serving your team and community. It's not about capacity. It's about building the capacity and using it for the best outcome for your

“There’s a saying that leaders should work smart, not hard. However, the hard work and smart work are not mutually exclusive”

team and corporation. It's not about being in-charge, but about being responsible for those in your charge. You need care and effectiveness, so you instill high levels of both in traditional authority based leadership. With care you build a stronger team and have long lasting success. With effectiveness you ensure that things get done and results are delivered. If you have one without the other it will be half baked.”

Daunting Times Ahead

In the global landscape there is the economic power sphere with GDP growth happening in Asia, while North America and Europe stay stable, said Junaid. *“At the same time we have climate change impacting economies in many ways with new economies emerging. The world's GDP doubled in the last 17 years, and is going to reach \$142 Trillion in the next 10 years. What it shows is that you need to have more efficient and effective ways of working and the old style of leadership is going to be outdated. Frontline leaders in China are showing a lot of interest in this subject. The landscape is changing and with it the leadership style.”*

It's a very diverse global workforce composed of Millennial and Gen Z in terms of ethnicity, beliefs and language. Leaders will operate in truly global economies and lead a very diverse workforce. *“A language of care is the common denominator and that's the right thing for you to do as a leader. The world is becoming increasingly complex and to successfully operate in it we need to train our teams to embrace the opportunities in the knowledge based economies, and what else can be more effective than a servant leadership approach?”*

7 attributes model – The Core is Relationship Building, Growth mindset, and Actions

The 7 attributes comprise Understanding the end goal; Connecting with People; Emotional intelligence; Execution mindset; Perpetual learning; Relationship building; Ability to delegate.

Understanding the End Goal

As the leader you create the end goal at times, and you fully understand the mission and transform your understanding of it into a very simple message so your team understands the end-goal and begins with the end in mind, said Junaid.

“Throughout the process you constantly appraise yourself, your tasks, and ensure you concentrate on only the important things, and not allow failure to derail you. Michael Jordan was without doubt the best player of the century. He had his eyes on the end goal knowing it was working hard and playing the best basketball on his life and was able to achieve greatness, missing 9000 shots in the process and lost 300 games, and single-handedly lost 26 games for his team only because of his failures. But he was focused on the end result and he did

not allow his failures to derail him. Servant leadership is like that with an unwavering, perpetual focus on the end goal, and you do not allow failures to become a roadblock or showstopper, and treat them as lessons learnt.” Constantly look at the opportunity to do appraisal and focus on only important things that propels us towards the end goal.

Connecting with People

As a servant leader you have an obligation to be connected with people. *“It doesn't mean that you have to be a social butterfly or a people person. Even if you're an introvert you can be connected with people. The key is to be a sincere listener, and when you listen to stories you establish connection.”*

“You need to have a strong need to fight this ego driven narcissistic urge inside you. Every single person has a degree of narcissism in his mindset. The problem arises when you allow it to grow for then it hurts you and destroys you. You have to constantly check your ego and narcissistic approaches that lead you to believe you're the top gun. Improve your social skills and most important, your humility and attitude of gratitude that will enable you to engage with all levels. When you complain and whine you don't establish connection. You need to have a 360 degree connection through your attitude, listening and social skills for at the end of the day relationships matter.”

Emotional Intelligence

EI is extremely important for anybody more so servant leaders. *“It's extremely critical to have an understanding of your own emotions and people's emotions and of your surroundings, and having control over your emotions is very critical.”*

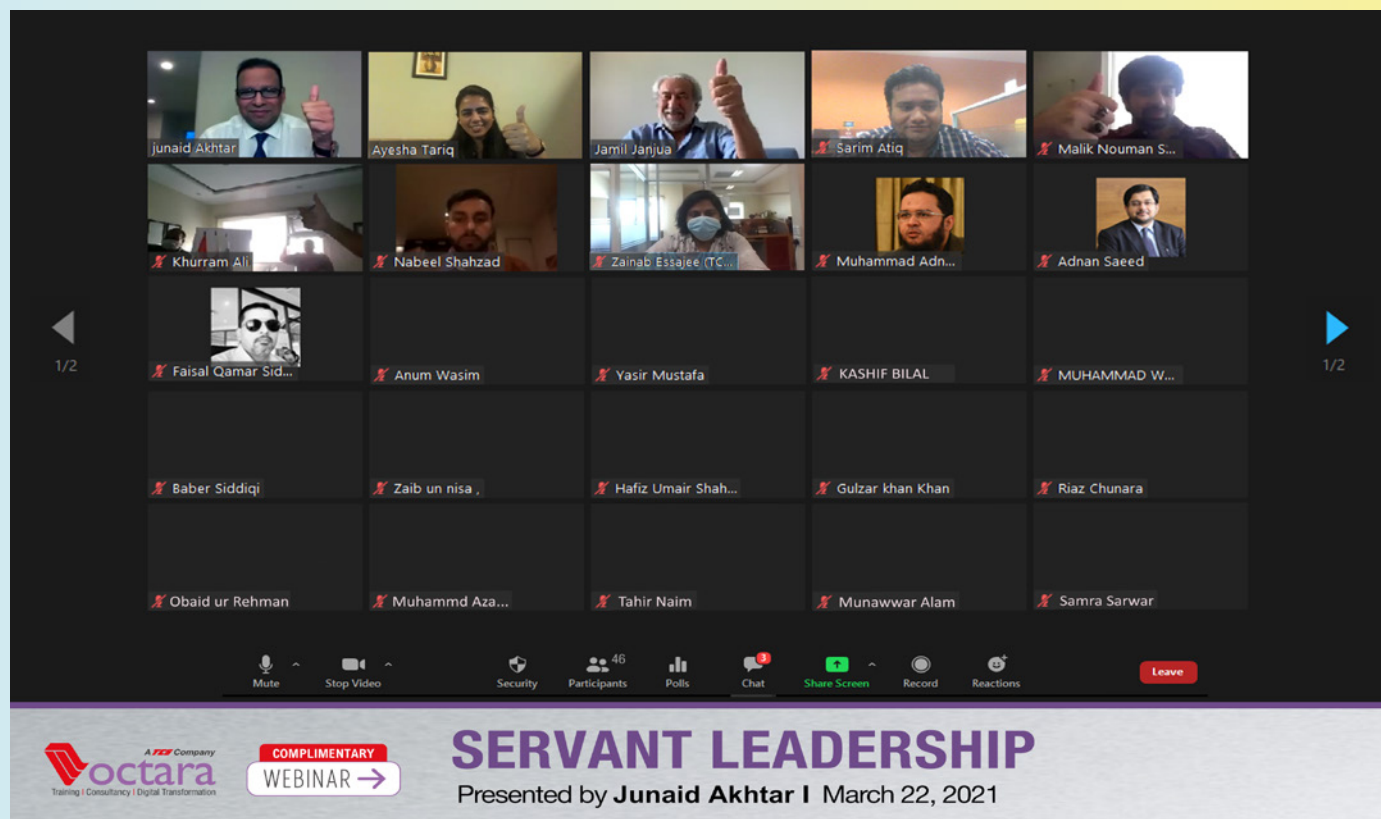
“As a servant leader you have to train yourself to reach and stay in the maturity spectrum of your emotional intelligence and constantly look for opportunities when you're with people to create synergies; meaning that you don't look at your talent or the other person's talent, but look for opportunities to multiply that talent and create opportunities for yourself and the other people. People don't care how much you know unless they know how much you care. With all the knowledge in the world if you don't care for people, then that knowledge will not serve you or your team. Understanding your emotions and managing them in a way that suits the circumstances is the surest way to lead you to the path of success.”

Execution Mindset

Any effective leader will always focus on the end-goal, and in order to achieve it you must have an execution culture and mindset. *“You can have the best strategy and team in the world but if the execution is missing you will not get to the end result. Execution is a very strategic initiative but it must be*

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accompanied by an execution methodology that your team can understand. For that you need to do an 80-20, a cost appraisal, and make sure you pick the 3 or 4 things most necessary to achieve the end goal. If you do this on a constant basis it will not only transform you but also transform your surroundings, your team and corporation.”

When you propel yourself up you secure a bright spot for yourself, team and corporation in the future and rise on a sustainable basis and not just with a rising tide that raises all ships. “You look for strategy and design it, but you don’t leave it there. You focus on how to make it happen. Execution mindset is extremely critical. The most awesome strategy will not work devoid of actions. As servant leaders we have to be action oriented.”

This applies to one’s personal life as well. Life can throw so many oddballs at you. Crying and complaining is completely natural. In that moment of trial and tribulation rebuilding is not natural. Driving a car is not natural. Swimming is not natural. But when you train yourself it becomes natural. “As a servant leader you train your mind to react in a meaningful way despite a very challenging situation. If you do it constantly over a period of time it becomes your second nature.”

Perpetual Learner - Reading Books, Situations, People and Megatrends

In our society there is a miss-concept that once you secure a degree you can consider yourself an educated person, said Junaid. “That’s really a stupid idea, it’s bizarre and hilarious. A degree’s shelf life is only a couple of years after which you

forget almost everything about it. A perpetual learner is the one you need to be for he doesn’t consider himself an educated person by the attainment of a degree, be it a PhD. Perpetual learning is a process of which the common tool is reading books, but you also read situations and people; and megatrends; what’s going on around you, the stability or instability of your region, and most importantly the areas that impact your business like finance and the manufacturing processes of your company, and your team’s interests.”

Leaders are readers they say who educate themselves on a constant basis, and that’s how they succeed. “Most successful leaders didn’t even have a degree which can give you a low edge but sometimes it’s a pillar because it gives you a mindset that you’re all done, you’re good. Bill Gates, Ted Turner, Steve Jobs, Michael Dell, Mark Zuckerberg, Henry Ford, Walt Disney and Steve Wozniak of Apple didn’t have any college degree at all.”

“So, constantly and perpetually educate yourself through travel, reading books and situations, reading people, your surroundings and megatrends. You cannot be a decent person without a lot of reading. Leadership is a very high status, especial position, and in order to achieve and sustain that position you have to be a reader and perpetual learner.”

Relationship builder - feel comfortable to be uncomfortable

You mix and mingle with a lot of people as a leader. “You have to show that you have no insecurities and feel extremely comfortable meeting and staying with people who are more

“No matter how brilliant you are you will become the average of the 5 people you are most closely associated with”

intelligent, learned and effective than you. By doing that you raise your collective level and how you do that is by displaying your humility and embracing an attitude of gratitude. You seek mentors and offer yourself as mentor to other people. On one hand you're learning and on the other you're educating people. It's very critical for your growth as a leader.”

No matter how brilliant you are you will become the average of the 5 people you are most closely associated with. That's why leaders surround themselves with people who are smarter and better educated than themselves. You can only do that if you have killed your narcissistic trends, controlled your ego and possess good emotional intelligence. That way you constantly raise your level by learning from people around you which is the name of the game as a servant leader. You cannot afford insecurities and must feel comfortable to be uncomfortable.

Ability to Delegate - Focus on the Critical Things, Groom More Leaders

Everybody faces a paucity of time, especially a leader for whom it's imperative to be very smart in so many things. *“The smart idea is that you don't do everything yourself. You must delegate on a constant basis and free up time to focus on the critical things. At the same time when you delegate stuff to your people it's good for their growth. As a servant leader you have an obligation to groom more leaders. Slowly and gradually your team becomes more and more efficient. There's a saying that leaders should work smart, not hard. However, the hard work and smart work are not mutually exclusive. So don't fool yourself with that concept. The hard work pays. Focus on hard work and delegate to your team so it can grow.”*

Overestimation – Scaling Mount Stupid

You have to understand that narcissistic trends are enemy number 1, warns Junaid. *“We, as human beings and leaders, are very bad at assessing ourselves. We see ourselves as the best match for Socrates, and almost always we are wrong. We overestimate our talents regardless of which area. There is a hazard here for leaders. If you can control this by getting constant feedback from people and being open to it, then you'll stay clear of Mount Stupid. Conquer your narcissistic attitude and embrace humility.”*

Nobel laureates Drs. David Dunning and Justin Kruger got the Nobel Prize in 2000 for their report *“Unskilled & Unaware of it – How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments”* published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (Volume 77). Leaders derail themselves by assessing their ability at a

very high level which is often not the case.

Intellectual Curiosity & Growing Mind – Valley of Despair

“As a leader it is imperative to have intellectual curiosity and a growing mind. The killing proposition is when a leader beguiles himself into thinking that he knows all there is to know and gets rigid in his attitude. When a leader opens his mind he finds he knows nothing. It's called the valley of despair and one should stay there for a while and as you keep going you realize you have control.”

“Returning to emotional intelligence we raise it day by day with every opportunity and every failure. Aligning your own emotions both in your professional and personal lives with the emotions of the people and surroundings in your domain, and channeling your emotions in a way that is not disruptive, and it is constructive and at the same time easy to communicate. It's a vast subject.”

Being aware of the hierarchy of needs (Maslow's Pyramid) will help you manage your people more effectively, said Junaid Akhtar. *“Different people are motivated by different things. One size does not fit all and the needs and preferences of people differ. At work people need recognition and opportunities for self-actualization.”*

Learning from China

Servant leadership is getting very popular in China, observed Junaid Akhtar. *“They realize that the next generation of work force will be much diversified and will not be led by the traditional leadership approach. In Pakistan it might take a few more years and programs like these will raise awareness.”*

Traditional corporate leaders and servant leaders are separated by their ego and narcissistic mindset. To practice servant leadership you first have to build your credibility and rapport through humility with your team so they know you care for them and even in the harshest moment they realize that when you're tough on them you're tough for a reason and they respect that. Measure a dose of care with a dose of effectiveness.

The 7 attributes model ensures respect and rapport with your team were the final gems that Junaid Akhtar left the audience with, recommending the reading of *“Leaders Eat Last”* by Simon Sinek as well as the works of Ken Blanchard and Daniel Goleman ■

Future Normal: Fast Forward #8

The Apple Watch can detect COVID-19; plastic-free, water-soluble cleaning tabs; create-your-own virtual humans; senior digital workouts; and AI-grown strawberries.

Blog by Henry Coutinho-Mason

Published on February 11, 2021

This week, I'm launching a new experiment: a second, much shorter edition, featuring a handful of stories that reveal The Future Normal.

Do let me know if you find it useful! Every story not only shows us what's around the corner, but also a truth about trends and innovation.

Even better: can you share these insights with someone who can use them? The future is ours to build, together.

Apple Watch can spot COVID-19 up to a week before conventional tests

#FutureNormal // Consumer-focused gadgets are the new professional-grade medical devices. Continuous monitoring will transform healthcare: from rushing to fix problems when they become critical, to ideally preventing them from happening at all.

#TrendTruth // The biggest changes are happening outside your industry. Who has the solution to your (customers') biggest problem?

Bold raises \$7m for senior-focused fitness programs

#FutureNormal // Older audiences will expect the same quality of digital services as younger generations. What's your Boomer UX strategy?

#TrendTruth // The Peleton For Z is the new Uber for X. How can you adapt a winning formula for a new demographic?

Proctor & Gamble launches low-carbon EC30 cleaning swatches

#FutureNormal // After removing the water, these plastic-free, soluble cleaning swatches are cheaper & lighter to ship, and require less space to store. Get ready for everything in your to be similarly radically and sustainably reinvented.

#TrendTruth // Just being sustainable isn't be enough. Triple win solutions — smaller, cheaper and greener — are where it's at.

Unreal launches MetaHuman creator

#FutureNormal // Kim Kardashian's hologram of her late father was just the start. As avatar technology becomes widely

accessible, we'll all be able to create our own virtual companions that matter to us.

#TrendTruth // "The next big thing will start out looking like a toy".

AI will transform the future of work. For good and bad.

Two stories from China that show our conflicted feelings about where this trend is headed: AI is better at growing strawberries than humans vs When Your Manager is Inhuman

#FutureNormal // The benefits of AI-driven production are too great to reject. But how companies manage these technologies will be one of the great issues of our time. Strong institutions will help us avoid a dystopian two-tier society, where a few direct the machines and enjoy focusing on higher-order, human-to-human tasks, while the many are directed by emotionless and inflexible algorithms.

#TrendTruth // Millions worldwide share these fear of displacement and a loss of autonomy. We're all human, and we have similar hopes and fears.

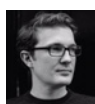
LVMH pulls the plug on Fenty

#FutureNormal // This is a little painful, given I'd just featured Fenty in this week's longer newsletter. But while Rihanna's high fashion venture might have stumbled, the underlying juggernaut still appears to be on track: Savage X Fenty just raised \$115 million from LVMH's private equity fund.

#TrendTruth // Innovation involves winners and losers. Placing bets keeps you at the table. Kill the ones that aren't working, and double down on those that are ■

Source:

<https://thefuturenormal.substack.com/p/the-future-normal-fast-forward>



Author The Future Normal / ex-MD @ TrendWatching / cofounder 3Space & Redo

ISLAMIC WISDOM FOR TODAY

With Abbas Husain

ISLAMIC SCHOLAR

Session 1

Monday, April 19, 2021 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm (Pak Time)

ISLAM IN ALIGNMENT WITH MODERNITY

A five-fold model of Islam will be presented showing the richness of the faith as a culture, a civilization and a history. The participants will have useful modalities for dealing with the diverse perspectives on Islam.

- A way of looking at the Deen of Islam at the personal, social and environmental levels, that is so necessary in the present world.
- References to the best thinkers and materials for further research

BOOK GIFT:

 **The Vision of Islam** by Sachiko Murata and William Chittick to all participants. [PDF Book]

Session 2

Thursday, April 22, 2021 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm (Pak Time)

THE QURAN: WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IN IT?

Muslims have always believed that the Quran is the final Revelation by Allah to mankind. How are we to understand this statement? How reader's attitudes are shaped by the Self-Description of the Quran?

- To learn some basic facts about the Quran as a Book.
- Some amazing qualities of the Quran offered by recent scholars

BOOK GIFT:

 **English Translation of the Quran** by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem to all participants [PDF Book]

Session 3


Thursday, April 29, 2021 | 11:00 am – 12:00 pm (Pak Time)

SPIRITUALITY IN THREE TRADITIONS

All religions insist on "the spirit" rather than "the letter" of the law, the inward meaning rather than outward form. By examples from Buddhism, Christianity and Islam this session will offer a selection of moral and spiritual teachings greatly needed by humanity today.

- Simple wisdom stories that contain great teaching
- References to websites and videos for further reading

BOOK GIFT:

 **The Hundred Letters** "an unsurpassed manual on human perfection" by Shaikh Maneri to all participants [PDF Book]

Voluntary contribution for the cause of teacher education may be made to Teachers Development Centre.

Bank Al Habib: **Teacher's Development Centre**
Account #: **1007 0081 001059 014**



Facilitator:

ABBAS HUSAIN

- Director Teacher's Development Centre (TDC) since 1997
- Taught Islamic Studies at Aga Khan University - School of Nursing for 19 years
- Conducted research in Islam and the Quran since 35 years
- MA (English) from University of Karachi, and an M.Ed (TESOL) from University of Manchester.
- Received professional training from Universities of Toronto, Pittsburgh, Louisville and Chicago [1998-2009]
- Reached 85,000 teachers in a variety of training sites and settings all over Pakistan and in Muscat, Dubai, Kabul and Dushambe.
- In February 2020, he received "Lifetime Achievement Award" from Millennium Institute of Professional Development Islamabad for his dedicated work in teaching excellence

His vast erudition, interest in the teaching-learning issues in formal educational institutions, and a critical study of the interface of modernity with spirituality has made him a formidable presence in all policy-making sites in Pakistan. He believes that the youth of Pakistan with vision, guidance and purpose will lift it out of the present morass it is in for a future worth living in.

To register, click here:

<https://bit.ly/2O0ScB6>

Spots are limited to 100 Only,
register now so you won't miss out.

For details & registration, please contact:

Sarim Atique at: sarim.atique@octara.com,
Mobile: 0345-8949470, Ph: +92-21-34520093

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THE HAPPINESS AFFAIR

ONLINE ((•)) TRAINING

Finding Your Purpose of Being

April 27, 2021 | 10:00 am – 1:00 pm (Pak Time) via Zoom

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Let us make the World a Happy Place to live for everyone. We live in a fast-paced setting with a constant struggle to have more in life which does not give us opportunity to pause and think about our everyday activities, feelings and emotions. There are ways to foster happiness at workplace, for personal relationships and in young children which are required to adopt and practice on regular basis.

This three-hour online training will deep dive into the positive psychology, exploring the research-backed ways for a meaningful and happy life. The happiness practices will offer participants to learn embedding habits in their daily routine which will boost happiness to enjoy a content life.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this training, attendees will be able to comprehend the:

- Happiness, its origin and importance
- Misconceptions about always on happiness mode
- Role of social behaviors for happiness
- Cooperation, forgiveness & reconciliation
- Personal power to see the future self
- Cultivating positive attitude at workplace
- Disciplining the mindset and thought process
- Strengthening the psychological immune system



Facilitator: SANAM FATIMA

Certified 'Happiness' Ambassador from University of California, USA

Seasoned Marketing Communication Strategist

16 years of rich experience across integrated communication strategy, media planning, event management, social media curation, channel allocation, retail visibility & creative designing

Sanam's belief is 'Keep Learning and Keep Teaching'

To register, please click here:

<https://bit.ly/2QhP8RO>

INVESTMENT

PKR **5,000/+SST**
Per Participant

10% Early Bird Discount valid till 19th April 2021

Discounted Fee: PKR **4,500/+SST**

Fee Includes:

- e-Learning Material • Digital Certificate of Attendance • Virtual Business Networking
- Post-Workshop Advisory Services • Membership for TCS Octara WebMall+ (WhatsApp Group)
- Octara Loyalty Card**

** Entitles card holder to 15% discount on all future Octara Trainings (online & classroom)

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Tel: 021-34520708, Cell: 0343 5940485

Bring this program In-house at attractive discount

This workshop can be customized to suit specific needs of your organization which may lead to significant savings. Please contact Sarim Atique at sarim.atique@octara.com or call at 0345-8949470

For details & registration, please contact:

Sarim Atique at: sarim.atique@octara.com, Mobile: 0345-8949470, Ph: +92-21-34520093

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A Conversation on

SUBMISSION: Being One!

April 28, 2021 | Regent Plaza Karachi | 3:30 pm – 6:30pm

Talk Overview

The ego likes a fight. The present is a means to some end, a barrier and an enemy. Things got to be a certain way, my way and that's the only way. Spiritual practice takes us to submission to the moment. It sees the present as the present, the only opportunity to make any difference to whatever future there might be or one intends for. It allows us to take a step back from own minds, see our own 'little me' that presents itself as BIG aka EGO talking!

In this inspirational and interactive talk, we will learn more about how Submission lets powerful action flow out of us not just for own little selves, but for all beings and is aligned with the good force, always at play! Our work then is not for little accolades but for the monsters we kill within to rise above even more.

Talking Points

- Submission - What it means, achieves and takes
- What Submission is not...
- EGO - Coming to a common understanding, what it gives and takes
- Identifying EGO in action...
- Moment of Truth - Submitting or Resisting?
- Roots of Evil - Research on Good & Bad Behaviour, causes & behaviours
- Big Me vs Little Me vs Auto Me - Understanding 3 Mes'
- Change Model:
 - From Auto Me to Aware me
 - From Little Me to Big Me
 - From Big me to Auto Me
 - Tips on Growing Awareness

Learning Outcomes

- Gain greater awareness of self beyond ego patterns
- Recognise the power of submission and being one with the situation
- Understand how mind works and see it from distance
- Feel resistance and letting it go for action to flow

Return to life and work with spiritual connect and zeal to be!

Investment

PKR 9,000/* +SST Per Participant

GROUP DISCOUNT AVAILABLE

Fee Includes:

- Hotel Venue • **IFTAR DINNER*** • Certificate of Attendance
- Business Networking • **Post-Workshop Advisory Services**
- **Membership for TCS Octara WebMail+ (WhatsApp Group)**
- **Octara Loyalty Card***

*Entitles card holder to 15% discount on all future Octara Trainings

*Subject to change as per the guidelines from Sindh Government on CoVID_19

Facilitator:

Umair Jaliawala



- A Social Entrepreneur, Activist, Trainer and Keynote Speaker specialised in Leadership, Enterprise and Technology (LET) subjects
- Certified in Humanistic Integrated Counselling
- Certified Master Facilitator for Social Enterprise and Active Citizens from British Council
- Certified Trainer for Micro-Entrepreneurship
- Founder & CEO of Torque Corp
- Managing Director of Jaliawala Pvt. Ltd
- Founder of TGRS Islamabad

Send your cheque in favor of Octara Private Limited

To: **Umair Tariq, Admin & Accounts Executive**

Octara Private Limited - 1/E-37, Block-6, P.E.C.H.S., Karachi.

Tel: 021-34520708, Cell: 0343 5940485

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Training Calendar

Programs in April-August 2021

Topic	Duration	Trainer	Date	Loc.
Islamic Wisdom for Today: Islam In Alignment With Modernity 	60 min	Abbas Husain	19-Apr-21	Zoom
Islamic Wisdom for Today: The Quran: What Is It? What Is In It? 	60 min	Abbas Husain	22-Apr-21	Zoom
Online Training: The Happiness Affair	3-hours	Sanam Fatima	27-Apr-21	Zoom
A Conversation on Submission: Being One! 	3-hours	Umair Jaliawala	28-Apr-21	KHI
Islamic Wisdom for Today: Spirituality In Three Traditions 	60 min	Abbas Husain	29-Apr-21	Zoom
Webinar: Win Customer through Effective Communication	60 min	Catherine Bentley	05-May-21	Zoom
Online Training: Personal Branding Using LinkedIn	60 min	Hammad Siddiqui	27-May-21	Zoom
Building Organisational Change Capability	1-Day	Uzma Aitqad	28-May-21	KHI
Webinar: The Science of Selling	60 min	John Bentley	02-Jun-21	Zoom
Win Customer through Effective Communication	60 min	Catherine Bentley	09-Jun-21	Zoom
Communication Skills for Finance Professionals	3-hours	Zaid Kaliya	10-Jun-21	Zoom
Digital Transformation for HR Professionals	5-hours	Dr. Frank Peter	15-Jun-21	Zoom
Digital Marketing Masterclass	5-hours	Dr. Frank Peter	16-Jun-21	Zoom
The Science of Selling	5-hours	John Bentley	23-Jun-21	Zoom
Leadership in Digital Age	5-hour	Mark Stuart	08-Jul-21	Zoom
Financial Analysis and Presentation	5-hours	Amer Qureshi	TBC	Zoom
HR Leadership Using HR Metrics & HR Analytics	5-hours	Talha Asim	TBC	Zoom
Retail Merchandising	TBC	Atif Farooqui	TBC	Zoom
Competency Based Interviewing Skills	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Enterprise Risk Management	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

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Lifelong Learning Lessons

Contributions from TCS Octara People!!!

Planning

No plan will ever be perfect. So sometimes we need to act, even if we don't yet have all the answers. As novelist Nora Roberts said: "I can fix a bad page. I can't fix a blank one"

Every plan should include a timetable. But we shouldn't be so strapped to a schedule that we forget the ultimate goal. There's a story about a flight to Europe where the plane lost one, then two, of its four engines. Each time, the pilot announced there was no problem; the flight would simply take an extra hour. Then a third engine quit, and he announced the plane would be three hours late.

"For Pete's sake," piped up one passenger, "if this keeps up we'll be stuck here all night."

Planners, like physicians, should have as their motto, "First, do no harm."

As Bob Mandel reminds us: "Every problem was once a solution to a previous problem."

Contribution by **M. Shahzad**
Office Support,
Octara Pvt. Ltd. - A TCS Company.
Sources - Funny Business issue



Deliberate, Then Decide

As a manager, you routinely make decisions, some more difficult than others. With so many people counting on you, you want to avoid making mistakes. But when you delay or avoid decisions, you weaken your authority.

Follow these steps to make smart decisions—without agonizing over every detail:

- **Define** what you need to decide. Limit your statement to one sentence. Example: "We're stuck with a costly inventory of unsold goods, and I have to decide how to get rid of it." List as many options as you can to close the gap between where you are and where you want to be. Don't jump on the first attractive alternative—and don't stop until you run out of ideas.
- **Reflect** on similar problems. You have dealt with in the past. Ask yourself: "What does my experience teach me?" Cite facts and lesson that relate to the current situation. Recognize that you probably won't gather all the information you want. Set the goal of making good decisions with sufficient information and limited time.

- **Ask others** to find flaws in your thinking. Go to three people you respect for input. Summarize their suggestions and note any overlap in their feedback. If a pattern emerges, you may have a solution.

- **Stay flexible.** Don't constantly second-guess yourself. But if new information comes to light, be willing to revise your initial decision. And don't ignore your gut.

If you are wavering between two courses of action, go with the one that doesn't give you a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach. Use Gen. George Patton's decision equation: If you're 51% sure your plan will work, execute it. If you're 80% sure, "violently execute it."

Contribution by **M. Nazim Ansari**
Creative Manager
Octara Private Limited - A TCS Company.
Sources - Communication Briefings



Goals And Objectives

We set our sights on lofty goals. But before we achieve them, we should ask, what happens then?

Mountaineer Ed Viesturs, who was on Mt. Everest when several climbers died after reaching the peak pointed out: ***“Getting to the top is optional, but getting down is mandatory. A lot of people get focused on the summit and forget that.”***

It's the same in our work and family life. If people are unpre-

pared, they learn too late about the downside of success. As Lily Tomlin said: ***“If I had known what it would be like to have it all, I might have settled for less.”***



Contribution by **M. Umair Tariq**
Admin & Accounts Executive,
Octara Private Limited - A TCS Company.
Sources - Funny Business Issue

Cost Cutting: The Two Minute Drill

While reading the issue Funny Business by Ed Kittrell published 2 decades ago, my eye got stuck on the hottest topic nowadays in many organizations during this pandemic era **“Cost Cutting”**. So, enjoy reading this blog with some interesting indications by successful frontrunners of their era and let's try to get feel of it.

Two minutes' worth of musings on a timely topic, to use or adapt as you fit.

Actor Lionel Stander said: “Anyone who lives within his means suffers from a lack of imagination.” A lot of individuals and agencies agree - just look at consumer debt and the federal deficit. But the same principle doesn't apply to business. Companies can't afford to run in the red, so we must keep cost under control. BUT HOW?

First, set strict limits and stick to them. Former Washington Redskins owner Edward Bennett Williams once said of his coach George Allen: “I gave him an unlimited budget and he exceeded it.” That inevitably leads to the fiscal equivalent of fourth and long.

Next, eliminate the obvious extravagances, the popular perks. Seminars in Hawaii. Airline up-grades. Take a lesson from philosopher George Santayana's father, who always traveled third class. When Santayana asked why, his father said: **“Because there is no fourth class.”**

And we were talking about philosophers, don't forget that skinflint Socrates. Once, a friend found him eyeing merchandise in the marketplace. The friend asked why he was looking, since he never bought anything. Socrates said: **“Because I am always amazed to see how many things there are that I don't need.”** Similarly, when planning budgets, instead of thinking “What must I have?” manager might ask, “What don't I need?”

Which brings up a related point? Economy, like charity, begins at home. All of us have pet projects and personal priorities. As Sir Anthony Eden said: “Everyone is always in favor of general economy, and particular expenditure.” But if cuts are to be credible, they must include our own area and operations.

One final note. In most successful companies, cost cutting isn't a sometime thing. It's a way of life, a continuous quest. Why? Because, as Herbert Hoover pointed out: “Every time we can make ends meet, somebody moves the ends.”



Blog contributed by **Zainab Essajee**
Senior Conference Producer & Marketing Lead
Octara Pvt. Ltd. - A TCS Company

Readers are encouraged to share their learnings for others with us at **zainab@octara.com** for inclusion in our upcoming issues.

Don't forget to send your recent picture and complete contact details.