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Dear Reader,

2020 VISION, AND NOT JUST IN HINDSIGHT

Happy New Year Readers, and May 2020 genuinely prove to be a happy start to a happy brand new decade, God Willing, Inshallah. Welcome to the Monthly E-edition of OCTARA that has evolved over the past decade into a major statement on corporate development, seeking out and drawing to Pakistan's shores some of the most brilliant minds in the world and imbibed their learning and genius. All that remains now is to put words into action.

Disruption is a given, as also is Reinvention. This calls for breaking with long established paradigms that have long outlived their utility but have become a deeply ingrained habit.

The 2020s will call for heightened levels of mental and physical agility, given the reality of global warming and climate change. We must prepare for it as best as we can, and a central tenet of that preparation is refining our communication ability to better exist as communities. Our lead story this issue is on two bright and beautiful sparks that are lighting up the landscape through a cross-fertilization of disciplines combining the dramatic arts with deep insights into human psychology to raise the emotional intelligence across all ages and all sectors of society. Mehreen and Omar Farooq, a dynamic husband and wife duo, did a two-day Workshop for OCTARA's very valued customers on "Impactful Communications", and we carry a detailed report of it.

Also in this issue is a piece on Irfan Bakaly, the big data man, prepping our corporate warriors for the tsunami of information being unleashed by quantum advancements in technology, and how to distill the essence and present it in the most concise and user-friendly manner. "Visually Effective Excel Dashboards" & "Microsoft Power Business Intelligence (BI)" were the two Workshops that he engaged in with OCTARA for a select group of participants, and we were all the much wiser for them.

Dr. Frank Peter, Corporate Trainer for Digital Transformation and Digital Marketing, and OCTARA's extremely valued Associate from Malaysia, has written about the critical importance of digital adoption, and Sohail Zindani, Researcher, Keynote Speaker, Happiness Activist, Leadership, Talent and Performance Consultant from Pakistan, has graced our pages with a piece on Organizational Culture.

Ayesha Tariq Sethi, Karachi based Corporate Learning Facilitator and a Graduate from The London School of Economics (LSE), has contributed an article on Leading a Team in Mindful Manner with Clarity in Communication. Tommy Weir, leading CEO Coach in the Emerging Markets and greatly valued OCTARA international Associate, has provided his peerless two bits on judging people and the pitfalls inherent therein.

On those thought-provoking notes, ladies and gentlemen, OCTARA is open for business, and may our time on Earth be profitable in more ways than one, Inshallah.

Happy **New Year 2020** to you all 😊

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Octara Training Planner

- January to March 2020

Octara's Customized In-House Trainings for your Workforce

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Attend any one Octara workshop in year 2020 & avail complimentary TCS Octara Loyalty Card which will entitle you to a flat 15% discount on regular fee to all Octara workshops & 'MORE' during the whole year 2020.

Happy New Year

2017
2018
2019

TEAM OCTARA WISHES YOU
AND YOUR LOVED ONES

SEASON'S GREETINGS &
A HAPPY NEW YEAR



2020



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Mehreen & Omar Farooq Deliver 2-day OCTARA Workshop on Impactful Communication

My faith in the future, which was never ever in doubt, was further fortified through a meeting with two high value bright sparks, young and brimming with empathy and a desire to collaborate, talent scouted by OCTARA and its tireless CEO Jamil Janjua, ever relentless in the search for optimizing Pakistan's human resource, especially that cutting edge which propels the corporate world, providing it with opportunity through workshops and seminars where interactions with the likes of MEHREEN & OMAR FAROOQ open new vistas and horizons leading to competitive advantage in the global village beset as it is with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

In this very VUCA operating environment the ability to communicate with clarity and finesse becomes of paramount importance, and this is where the OCTARA workshop on "Modern techniques for impactful communication" came in, with two husband and wife master-craftsmen in the art of communications leading a lively group of corporateers through two-days of 'out-of-the-box' proceedings that explored body language, tonality and thought process in the moment.

FINDING YOUR ZERO

"We're teaching them how to use theatre techniques and modern practices to master their body language which is 50% of their communication," says Omar Farooq, co-founder of TALK, and with an overseas degree in economics and an abiding interest in psychology. "Tonality, which is the pitch, volume, and speed at which they speak, the tempo they're keeping, comprises 38% of their communication. So, we could be saying exactly the same thing but if we say it in a different tonality it will carry a completely different meaning. How that filters into managing your relationships is that if you're able to find your zero and stay there and remain neutral at a physical level you have the ability to absorb an emotionally impactful situation and actively choose your reaction. As a result of your being able to choose your reaction you can determine the out-

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you're the one who is in control as opposed to a knee jerk reaction which is what happens when we are stressed, tired, overworked and been in our careers for 15 plus years."

BREAKING DOWN THE EGO

Mehreen and Omar started TALK on the 5th of September 2016 and have been doing workshops for entrepreneurs focusing on communication, leadership, relationship and confidence, and essentially getting people to connect with themselves internally and develop their relationships with themselves, allowing themselves to be vulnerable enough to face attacks from their deepest core voice which aims to break down their ego and bring them into

alignment and harmony, and allows them to deal with the world to fulfill their maximum potential after identifying what it is they really want to do with their lives, says Omar.

"Which is why we love to work with incubation centers, entrepreneurs and people who have started something for themselves. So TALK has evolved into one-on-one coaching. I'm an NLP certified life coach. Mehreen's has a Master's in Theatre from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) in London. So we have combined these techniques to get people to a point of harmony, gratitude, contentment and light-heartedness so they can actually enjoy their time and be in the moment, and use that as a foundation to experience the joy of being alive while being a giver, imparting knowledge, helping and giving their time to things which enrich them further and start a

positive cycle as opposed to a negative cycle which sucks you in and destroys everything which our parents have built up or we have spent time building up."

SELF-RELIANCE & DIGNITY OF LABOR

In a contracting economy with too many graduates chasing too few jobs, a certain amount of despondency is setting into our newer generations, and there's been a lot of talk about mental



health, and not just in Karachi or Pakistan, but worldwide. So I asked Mehreen to give some advice to our educated youth as to what else they can do in the absence of jobs?

"No matter what one does in life, self-reliance is a big issue. One should not hesitate to work with one's own hands. You need to have faith in yourself and a belief that you can do things by yourself. Nothing grows in the comfort zone. Where you grow is where you're challenged to exceed yourself and step out of your comfort zone. Self-employment is completely in your control. Both Omar and I are entrepreneurs and I work freelance as well. I have not done a job in most of my career. What I am driven by is the belief that what I'm doing adds value. I set a certain level of excellence for myself, and if I'm not reaching it then it's a job not well done in my eyes. I will not place my value in someone telling me that I have done a good job; I will make sure that I do the good job."

CLEANING CARPETS

Labor is underrated, says Mehreen. "There is nothing wrong in getting your hands and knees dirty. Ego will limit you and prevent you from reaching your maximum potential. There is no ego or shame in working hard and doing right by yourself. I have been on my knees with a carpet brush cleaning the theatre carpets. There was nothing wrong in that and I wanted to do it. I knew I wouldn't become a Shahrukh Khan overnight, and this is where I would have to start, and there is no shame in that."



FIND THE MARKET GAP

Omar's advice to the jobless is fairly simple and straightforward. "The first thing I would recommend to all of the younger generation is that if the economy is failing and you want to do something where-in you can provide for yourself, then apart from all of the techniques of breathing and taking care of your emotional state, I would simply do the research, find the market gap, see what demand is missing in the market and supply the market that. You'll be sure of becoming successful in your business because you're not going out to sell something that you think people will want to buy. You have the statistics that show what it is that the market needs, now find a way to fulfill that demand. Online stores, social media marketing, sitting at home and being the middleman is essentially the way business is evolving these days. So use technology as much as you can."

On that very practical note, thank you very much MEHREEN & OMAR FAROOQ!

Report filed by **Adil Ahmad** (Correspondent, OCTARA.COM)



Omar is a certified life coach and NLP practitioner from American Board of Neuro-linguistic programming. He is Graduate in Economics from University of London. Omar is working with Octara for management trainings.

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Mehreen is seasoned theatre professional from Singapore. She uses unique theatre technique for delivering trainings on Communication. Mehreen holds Masters in text and performance from Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts London. Mehreen is working with Octara for management trainings.

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BIG DATA DYNAMICS

The Fine Art & Complex Science of Countering Information Overload



Make for Two Highly Invigorating Octara Workshops with IRFAN BAKALY

Irfan Bakaly is worth his weight in gold, some would say. But he doesn't glitter the way marketing and management professionals do, and is liable to be overlooked in the galaxy of gurus that populate the training field. But big data is the big deal these days as we move into the largely uncharted realms of Artificial Intelligence and the Internet-of-Things, and this is Irfan Bakaly territory where he is at home and in command, simplifying and making user friendly critical information for management success that would otherwise boggle the mind.

Low key and understated, Irfan Bakaly's genius and unconditional devotion to the promotion of excellence brought him into the crosshairs of Microsoft's attention and he was feted with its Most Valuable Professional (MVP) Award three years running without his asking for it. It's something money can't buy, which comes as a surprise in this day and age of crass commercialization.

Insight, analysis and alerts

An Excel Dashboard provides insight, analysis and alerts. They're fully interactive and dynamic and can help with project management, customer service, retail management, financial forecasting and much more. It is meant for professionals having knowledge of MS Excel and who want to learn how to create Dashboards which will enhance their spreadsheets with easily understood and interactive data displays.

Speed & Efficiency

Power BI is a cloud-based business analytics service by Microsoft enabling anyone to visualize and analyze data with greater speed, efficiency, and high understanding. It can be used by Business Analysts and IT Personnel to create interactive data visualization from multiple data sources and deliver real-time insights across the organization.

Workshop delegates were asked to bring their laptops along for hands-on activity. The participants came from JS Bank, Pak Suzuki and EFU and were already working on big data, and looking to learn how they could bring data from different sources onto one platform.

Irfan Bakaly has been in training, consultancy and project designing field since 2003. After graduating he worked with Petroman and the ABC Institute as well as teaching IT to kids at the senior school level. "The beauty of schools is that they work for 195 days, and rest in the remaining days, giving me plenty of opportunity to engage with the corporate sector."

He has worked mostly with banks and petroleum companies with

regard to Excel, and with phone companies for big data. This practical knowledge adds a qualitative dimension to the workshops he conducts.

Data Analyst Most Coveted Job

Mathematics was a prerequisite for attaining his Bachelor's in Computer Science but surprisingly he was never fond of Maths! When he passed his Matriculation in 1992 the computer industry was gaining traction, so on the advice of his elder brother he focused his further education in this field. "In every organization the demand for data analysts is increasing, and it is said that in 2020 this will be the most coveted job. Companies do not as yet fully comprehend how to cash in the data that they have. Food Panda, Careem, Uber, Facebook and YouTube are some top of mind companies that are using big data to service their customers."

Destined to serve Pakistan

Irfan has more than 550 YouTube tutorials and a very large following. Appreciation of his particular skill sets as yet is clearly more overseas than it is in Pakistan, and on two occasions he has made the effort to move abroad, but unsuccessfully, and taken that as a sign from the Heavens that his bread and butter is destined in Pakistan. He is now focused on his son's education who is preparing for university, and

hopes that one day, Inshallah, the young man will become a global player in IT.

Irfan is the only person whose videos are in Urdu and available free of cost, and for that reason in 2016 Microsoft identified him for their MVP (Most Valuable Professional) Award. "It is an award given by Microsoft to those who promote Microsoft in community service to educate people. The program manager talked to me from Microsoft's regional office in Turkey, and I am the first MVP in the Excel category from Pakistan, and have won this award for the last 3 years consecutively."

One of the Indian hackers hacked Irfan Bakaly's YouTube account and he lost many followers, but he managed to redo

the process with backed up videos and data. "I never monetized my YouTube because I wanted to do it as a good will gesture." Bravo!



Report filed by **Adil Ahmad** (Correspondent, OCTARA.COM)



Irfan Bakaly is awarded as Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP). He is also a Microsoft Certified for Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Power BI. Irfan has over 20 years of hands-on experience.

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PEOPLE ARE NOTORIOUSLY SELFISH. YOU HAVE TO CONVINCE THEM WHY SOMETHING IS GOOD AND GIVE "THEM AN INCENTIVE"

*Interview with Dr Frank Peter,
Corporate Trainer for Digital Transformation
and Digital Marketing.*

ZEENAT CHAUDHARY: You have held three workshops related to digitisation in Karachi, one of which was on digital transformation. What is the value of digital transformation?

FRANK PETER: Many people use the term 'digital transformation' quite liberally. They will pepper in words like 'algorithm', 'machine learning' and 'AI' in a conversation without knowing what they mean. Businesses need to realise that digital transformation is (and should be) customer-driven. In other words, if you want to make money, you should enhance your customer experience via digitisation. This is all the more important because people have more choices than before, and whether you work in banking, retail or dining, you need to convince potential customers to choose your brand; and you do this via digitisation.

ZC: Which sectors in Pakistan have adapted to new technologies the fastest?

FP: The financial sector (banks, insurance companies) is probably the most advanced because they have no choice but to up their game to keep up with the competition. If you are a customer seeking a new credit card, a fast and convenient online process will trump a 30-day long, in-person paper application process. For agricultural and other labour-intensive sectors, digital transformation is slower because in this segment, labour is cheap in Pakistan and therefore implementing digital systems will end up being more expensive.

ZC: Is this one of the reasons why emerging economies have not digitised their agri-based businesses?

FP: Definitely. In Germany, labour is exceptionally expensive and there are labour laws, so you cannot make people work overtime without paying overtime, which is why companies opt for automation.

ZC: Why are people resistant to digitising their organisations?

Dr Frank Peter, Corporate Trainer for Digital Transformation and Digital Marketing, was in Karachi recently to conduct a series of workshops on behalf of Octara on social media marketing and digital transformation. In this interview, he talks about the critical importance of digital adoption.

FP: Everyone knows digital transformation is important but top-level executives are hesitant because of fear of the unknown and giving up control.

ZC: How do you change this mindset and the "fear of the unknown"?

FP: People are notoriously selfish. You have to convince them why something is good for them and give them incentives. For example, if you want to build an internal social media platform that will enable your employees to access day-to-day information, company news, peer reviews, etc., you have to give people an incentive to use it. For example, if the employees in your organisation rely on notice boards to find out company news, get rid of these boards. This will push people to use the platform if they want to know what is going on in the company.

ZC: How would you rate Pakistan's digital agility?

FP: Rating Pakistan's digital agility is a difficult call to make as I interact with a limited subset of individuals from Pakistan in my training sessions and they have a vested interest in digitisation. However, I recently found out via We Are Social [a global creative agency] that internet penetration is still very low in Pakistan and there is also a disparity between male and female users, which leads to many marketing challenges. There is no point pushing online marketing if your users don't exist online. However, there is a lot of room for growth.

ZC: What kind of businesses have you worked with to improve their day-to-day processes via digitisation?

FP: I previously worked with a hotel in Malaysia; it had a beautiful website but it didn't have a reservation button. You could check room availability but you had to email the hotel to make a booking.

Many people would rather go to another hotel site or use a website like Expedia or Booking.com. So I helped make that one change (adding a button), and it had an immediate impact. I also worked with an airline to figure out why potential customers had stopped buying tickets on their website. After looking through the data, we found that the system timed out too quickly, so it wasn't a great customer experience. We simply increased the number of minutes prior to the timeout and this helped the airline capture sales. My role was to train the airline staff to search for data via Google Analytics (which has a built-in sales funnel) analyse it and take action.

ZC: What soft skills do people need to adapt to digital transformations?

FP: Interpersonal communication and critical thinking are at the top of my list; many universities in Malaysia now offer critical thinking skills as a core curriculum. Other skills that are important are high EQ, creativity, and analytical thinking.

ZC: How much investment is required to digitise SMEs in particular?

FP: You can digitise office systems with minimal investment. A good start are those ugly steel filing cabinets so often used in offices and which are a remnant of the past. One can save time and effort by creating and using soft copies of files via scanning and cloud computing (a small company can use Google Drive, which is free, as the amount of storage space offered is sufficient). It is not much of a

example, a 19-year-old would prefer a 10-second video, while a 32-year-old may prefer a bullet point list; you need to promote the same product using different packaging and ways of distribution.

ZC: How should brands communicate with consumers on these social media platforms?

FP: Consumers come across hundreds of ads in a day, most of which they will ignore or not believe. Instead of using celebrity endorsements, ask past customers to share their experiences about the service or use micro influencers, who may only have 3,000-5,000 followers (as opposed to a celebrity with millions of fans) but are considered authority figures among their followers. For example, if a new shoe store opens up you will be more inclined to shop there if a friend or blogger you follow recommends it, as opposed to seeing a



Interpersonal communication and critical thinking are at the top of my list; many universities in Malaysia now offer critical thinking skills as a core curriculum. Other skills that are important are high EQ, creativity, and analytical thinking.

financial outlay but it will get your foot through the door. Another way is creating a social media account on Facebook or LinkedIn, etc., which is free (unless you are paying for media), although this will take time and effort to get results.

ZC: How can companies best use social media platforms to cater to consumers?

FP: Digital is not just for getting likes on Facebook and Instagram, sending out promotional emails or having a website with shiny buttons. Firstly, you must have a goal. Whether it is direct sales, lead generation, customer retention or awareness building, different goals require different approaches. If your goal is customer awareness then direct marketing (putting up Facebook posts that scream 'buy now!' or 'sale!') is not the way. Secondly, there is no point trying to reach everybody, it is a complete waste of time. You have to do a bit of data mining to figure out who your best potential customers are and then package the content in a way that they will want to consume it. For

random ad for it on Facebook.

ZC: What are the benefits of using social media in terms of ROI?

FP: For a company, social media should primarily be used to build a loyal customer base. So when CEOs ask me: "Do I get back more than I put in?" my answer is that the return is not always immediate because sometimes ROI is just a sentiment that you raise. For example, a bank should use social media to demonstrate that they are experts in handling money and investments by showcasing testimonials from happy customers, responding to online queries in a timely manner and showing they care about previous customers ■

Interview by Zeenat Chaudhary



Zeenat Chaudhary is from Aurora, she was also a participant of the workshop facilitated by Dr. Frank on July 3, 2019 in Karachi
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Manager Experience (ME) leads to Employee Experience (EE) which ultimately creates Organizational Culture (OC)

Sohail Zindani

How do employees feel about your organization – employee experience [EE]?

How is your organizational culture – [OC]?

These two questions get a lot of consideration and airtime in discussions about experience and culture. Unfortunately, like most of the cases, we are treating symptoms rather than the cause.

So where is the root?

It is in your Managers' Experience.

ME is the most dominant factor in retention, development, engagement and performance, revenue and operational efficiency. Yet, it's rarely talked about and least focused on.

Let's first look into what employee experience is. The EE is the entire journey an employee takes with your organization. This includes these 7 key stages where employees interact with their organization in a pivotal way:

- Attract: Recruit top talent
- Hire: Pick the best possible talent
- Onboard: Make the entry comfortable and engaging
- Engage: Allow them to bring their best to work
- Perform: Drive expectation and results
- Develop: Orchestrate growth
- Depart: Exit with grace

It also includes things like the physical work ambiance, relationships with coworkers and the ways a job supports one's overall lifestyle.

Where Manager Comes In?

If your organization is struggling to construct an engaging employee experience, it may be doing something fundamentally wrong.

Various researches have indicated that an employee's interaction with their manager is one of the most important factors for their success and engagement at work. If we consider the 7 stages of employee life cycle, the influence of manager can not be underestimated.

- The quality and reputation of managers influence who you attract as prospect.
- Manager's active involvement in recruitment process is positively correlated to employees' overall fit for job and retention.
- When manager is directly involved in onboarding process, the employee experience is 2.5 times more favorable for the onboarding exercise [Gallup].
- Managers account to roughly 70% of the variance in their team's engagement [Gallup].
- Only 2 in 10 employees agree that their performance is managed in a way that motivates them to do their best work [Gallup].

- Fifty-two percent of exiting employees say that their manager could have done something to prevent them from leaving their job [Gallup].

Clearly, if you want to radically transform your employee experience, you must first fix your manager experience.

Questions to Consider:

- How can a disengaged manager engage employees?
- Why a manager should care about giving performance review if she/he view the process as biased?
- How can a confused manager drive culture?

Questions to Consider:

If you can get your manager experience right, it will transform and grow every other aspect of your organization – from culture to performance management to customers experience and ultimately, the profit.

Managers are the bridge between leadership's vision and the hard realities of the front line. Managers are your most passionate brand ambassadors and also the most brutal critics – providing most needed feedback that moves the organization forward while avoiding roadblocks and dead ends.

So, the real challenge is how to make your managers your stars, not your scapegoats. In my experience, I've noticed that many leaders and organization undervalue the importance of manager's experience.

Here's how you can work on manager's experience building:

- Select managers carefully. Promote individual contributors, not solely on individual performance or on tenure. Select/Promote managers who have a natural flair for leading a team and who have demonstrated success working well with others. Fortunately, we have cool assessments available to help!
- Provide managers with the right support. Development programs are good, but rarely translate into managers feeling fully prepared for and inspired about their future. Leaders need to do a better job of investing in manager development -- especially in teaching them to have more effective conversations with their team and their boss. You will see the greatest return on investment by tailoring managerial roles and development plans to an individual manager's strengths rather than one-size-fits-all approach.
- Understand how it feels to be in their shoes. This only happens when we understand how critical their experience is for employee experience and overall organizational culture.

To conclude, managers experience is THE thing to focus in your 2020 strategy ■

All the best.

Article by Sohail Zindani



Sohail Zindani is a Researcher, Keynote Speaker, Happiness Activist, Leadership, Talent and Performance Consultant from Pakistan.

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Leading a Team? Stay Mindful of These Common Traps!

Ayesha Tariq Sethi

Every time a group of people get together in true essence to achieve a goal, they can move mountains. Those who regularly attend orchestra musicals understand the importance of harmonic cooperation between team members. However, the role of the orchestra master in leading state-of-the-art performance is instrumental. A true leader knows not only how to empower the team to voice their music but also when to leap to their rescue before chaos sets in. The team members engage often and actively with each other to maintain the ebb and flow of symphonies. However, conscious awareness and concerted effort in the right direction can go a long way in marking the distinction between losing and winning teams. What are the common traps that teams might run into?

Imbalanced Energy Within Teams

It often happens that subsets of teams emerge within a larger team context, mostly by unconscious design. This is driven by our tendency to form bonds with people who are similar to us, and hence more likeable. These subsets may or may not involve all members of a team. While this social arrangement often arises naturally, it decreases the energetic buzz and engagement within the team. Sometimes, all the 'happenings' become inevitably concentrated within the senior management or the managers and their personal favorites. As a result, some members feel left out and unheard, thus increasing their stress levels and inhibiting their oxytocin production.

A conscious effort by the management to understand how members in their team socialize face to face can go a long way in increasing the productivity of their teams.

Clarity and Communication

Most employees do not have any knowledge or information on where their organisations are heading. They lack clarity on the long term growth path of their companies, the challenges the organization is facing, and why changes

A true leader knows not only how to empower the team to voice their music but also when to leap to their rescue before chaos sets in. The team members engage often and actively with each other to maintain the ebb and flow of symphonies.

happen when they happen. Change management initiatives collapse often because they leave the employees confused, vague, and questioning their own futures within the organisations. That leads us to a critical question: how many organisations actually gather all of their employees to explain to them why they have introduced new changes, the nature and scope of these changes, and what will be the criteria of success/failure under the new system? This clarity is essential to long term success of an organization ■

Article by Ayesha Tariq Sethi



Ayesha Tariq Sethi is a Karachi based Corporate Learning Facilitator and a Graduate from The London School of Economics (LSE). She is successfully conducting trainings on EI, Social Intelligence, Digital Innovation and soft skills among the corporates of the region.

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DON'T JUDGE

Blog by Tommy Weir

“Don’t judge a book by its cover.” That’s a piece of advice that we’ve all heard, but do you follow it?

When I was writing my first book, my writing coach taught me to think: title, cover, inside flap, table of contents. He told me that a book needs to stand out in the midst of thousands of others on store shelves. Essentially, what he was saying is that people do judge a book by its cover, or at least, that the cover informs a person’s engagement with a book.

But that’s not completely true. And it certainly shouldn’t be.

Imagine if the world had judged the likes of Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, and Ernest Hemmingway on the aesthetics of their books’ front covers? Early editions of their works were often encased in

How many times have you made a snap judgement about the person sitting opposite you and proceeded to imagine what they do, where they live and what they are like, based on appearance, and appearance alone?

pictureless, dull brown leather binding—hardly the kind of covers to capture the imagination.

Thankfully, in the world of literature, we do tend to delve a little deeper, flicking through the pages of a book and maybe even taking a sneak peek at the closing chapter. Yet, the same cannot be said for life outside of the written word. Out there, we are ruthless.

As readers, we give books a chance. Yet, we are far less forgiving on the streets, in the workplace and via digital screens. We pass judgement on a constant basis, whether out loud or silently in our own heads. What’s more, we make little or no effort to venture beyond the “book cover.” For some people, judging others at first glance is an unavoidable part of human nature. For others it’s akin to a guilty pleasure—a pastime that they relish.

How many times have you made a snap judgement about the person sitting opposite you and proceeded to imagine what they do, where they live and what they are like, based on appearance, and appearance alone?

For the most part, the everyday judgments we make about the people around us are harmless, rarely leaving the confines of our brains or the walls of our homes. However, in the workplace, judging a book by its cover can lead to missed opportunity, misinformation, or even fatal business mistakes.

The dreaded job interview is perhaps the stage where judgment is most harshly handed down, and the area is becoming greyer and murkier for those responsible for hiring. Once upon a time, age, social class and formal education determined who could do what, but the lines are blurring. These days, teenagers in t-shirts and jeans—the kind who might not make it to the interview stage for a job at a local store—can now build global tech firms and billion-dollar business empires. We write them off at our peril.

Of course, judgment is an integral part of leadership, but the judgements we make should be based on sound research and solid facts, not gut feelings and first impressions. Sure, going with your gut or following your instincts may pay off some of the time, but not every time. That’s just another drawback of being human—and it’s one that we have to overcome, frankly, by making an effort—and by embracing artificial intelligence (AI).

We all know that objectivity is essential to sound decision-making, but that requires work. To be objective, we first have to learn, read up, listen to others and take the time to understand what a person or topic is all about. It might all seem obvious, but how many of us actually lead that way?

It is on the objectivity front that AI can help a leader to excel. Systems driven by AI can absorb and analyse vast pools of data on people, processes and company performance, without the interference of human bias that can skew and sway results.

The challenge then, is for us mere mortals to continue where the AI insights end, and act with objectivity and an open mind.

Don’t judge a book by its cover; take the time to turn the page ■

Source: www.linkedin.com/pulse/its-lonely-top-tommy-weir/



Dr. Tommy is the leading CEO Coach in the Emerging Markets. Sitting in their shadow, he typically advises CEOs on growth in the emerging markets. He is exclusively working with Octara for his workshops in Pakistan and was the Keynote Speaker of 17th MAP Convention 2015.

For Inquiries, info@octara.com

Upcoming OCTARA TRAINING PLANNER 2020



PROGRAMS IN JANUARY 2020

January 14, 2020 - Karachi

Business Writing Essentials *

Catherine Bentley

January 16, 2020 - Karachi

Sales Leadership *

Shahzad Akhtar

January 21, 2020 - Karachi

Enhance Managerial Skills *

Suhail Farooq

January 23, 2020 - Karachi

Procurement & Supply Chain Management *

Yalman Ansari

JANUARY 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
*	*	*	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	*

* Register a minimum of **10 DELEGATES** in any combination in the above four programs & **SAVE 30% ON REGULAR FEE**

PROGRAMS IN FEBRUARY 2020

February 4, 2020 - Karachi

Mastering Contract Management

to Maximize Efficiency and Financial Performance

Syed Amjad Wahab

February 7, 2020 - Karachi

Effective Business Support Practices

Zaufyshan Haseeb

February 7, 2020 - Karachi

Building Effective Teams

Haseeb Hasan

February 12-13, 2020 - Karachi

Compensation & Benefit

Robert Mosley

February 14, 2020 - Karachi

Pay for Performance and Retention

Robert Mosley

February 19, 2020 - Karachi

Crisis Management & Leadership

Tim Curtis

February 28, 2020 - Karachi

21 Effective Brainstorming Techniques

Dave Nelissen

FEBRUARY 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
*	*	*	*	*	*	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

PROGRAMS IN MARCH 2020

March 2020 - Karachi

Digital Marketing Masterclass

Dr. Frank Peter

March 2020 - Karachi

Designing Employee Experience

-A Design Thinking workshop for HR professionals

Frederik Haentjens

March 2020 - Karachi

Negotiation Skills

Local Trainer

March 2020 - Karachi

Future for Institutional Relationship

Noaman Majid

March 2020 - Karachi

Emotional Intelligence for Leadership Excellence

John Bentley

March 2020 - Karachi

Understanding Fintech, Cryptocurrencies & Blockchain

Petros Geroulanos

MARCH 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	*	*	*	*

...only from Octara!!!

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	 Ranjan De Silva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mastery of Self through Neuro Linguistic Programming Mind Programming for Sales Success A Better Way to Sell – Sales Mastery through Self Mastery
	 Dr. Peter Senge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership & Innovation for a Sustainable Future
	 Kate Sweetman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinvention - Accelerating Results in Age of Disruption
	 Dr. Tommy Weir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Dubai Style Leading for Future
Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) & Leadership	 Raj Kumar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Ocean Strategies for Leaders Creativity & Innovation
Business Communication & Leadership	 Lucy Cornell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women, Power and Voice with Lucy Cornell Connect to Inspire
Digital Transformation	 Dr. Frank Peter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Marketing for Masterclass Digital Transformation for HR People Social Media Marketing Tactics Digital Transformation for Finance Professionals
Lego® Serious Play® (LSP)	 Pete Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Building using LEGO SERIOUS PLAY®
	 Per Kristiansen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity @ Workplace using LSP Methodology
Creativity & Innovation	 Dave Nelissen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 Effective Brainstorming Techniques 21 Effective Selling Techniques
Exponential Organisations	 Dr. José Cordeiro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Transformation Via Exo Models Future of Business Management & the Millennials
Emotional Intelligence	 John Bentley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional Intelligence for Success Emotional Intelligence for Leaders Emotional Intelligence for Technical Manager
HR Training, SHRM & CIPD	 Tom Raftery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning HR Business Case
HR & Training and General Management	 Soraya Sarif	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing the Millennial Mindset
Remuneration, Compensation & Benefits and HR	 Robert Mosley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation & Reward Management Performance Management Performance Appraisal & Pay-For-Performance Job Descriptions and Job Evaluation Compensation for Sales & Sales Incentive Plans Advanced Pay Benchmarking and Total Pay Design
Information Technology	 Fred Van Leeuwen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate in Business-Aligned IT-Strategy
Customer Service	 Ron Kaufman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uplifting Service
Sales & Marketing	 Bob Urchuck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disciplined for Life: You are the Author of Your Future Motivate Your Team in 30 Days
	 Brian Tracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Performance Selling
Communications	 Jeremy Parsons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis in Action Crisis in TALK
	 Catherine Bentley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Communication Masterclass Win Customers through Effective Communication
Operations & Quality Management	 Alan Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Quality Management Measuring, Monitoring and Improving Customer Experiences
Maintenance Management	 Ben Stevens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate Maintenance Masterclass Certificate in Best Maintenance Practices Project Management Essentials Certificate in Reliability Centered Maintenance
Crisis Management	 Jim Truscott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Art of Crisis Leadership Incident Management in The Digital Age
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