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*Dear Reader,*

The woolies are out and the bonfires lit as the mercury does a dive into single digits on a nightly basis. Fried fish and chicken 'yakhni' along with 'anday garam' are selling like hot potatoes, and sweet potatoes are also conspicuous by their presence on the roadsides in pushcarts as Karachi experiences its fabled winter season, a time of year when the glitterati and the literati flock to the fabled shores of the Arabian Sea to kick up their heels and let down their hair and make merry for many weeks on either side of Christmas.

Enter the wet blanket that's been a party-pooper across the globe, the shape changing master of disaster, a corona gone crazy, the despicable and dastardly, COVIDDDDD-19!! However. Laakin. You can take the people out of their party, but you cannot, repeat cannot, take the party out of the people. So, with a prayer on their lips and a song in their hearts, the PARTY continues unabated, as the human herd heads towards herd immunity.

Meanwhile the baton exchange zone in Uncle Sam's domain, plagued by chaos and confusion, has nevertheless mercifully taken the spotlight away from the virus, at least for the time being, and that's all the comment that we're going to make on the new circus that's taken over from Barnum & Bailey in the Wild West!

This issue, we introduce you to quite literally, a man for all seasons, **Shahjahan Chaudhary**, whom many of us know as a Tech Entrepreneur and Venture Capitalist who, in this COVID season, has shifted his coordinates from Karachi to a lovely little place near Lisbon called Sintra. Read all about his new venture "Assembly F" and its off-shoot "DEMO50" that promises an exponential enhancement in the ranks of new wealth creators.

Also in this issue we dig deep into the art and science of branding and corporate communications aided and abetted by **Dr. Valerie Bram**, a heavyweight Specialist in Psycho-Linguistics, who conducted an hour-long TCS Octara webinar on Zoom assisted by **Dr. Henry Fabian**, a registered clinical psychologist.

In our blast-from-the-past, we present **Dr. José Cordeiro's** workshop on "Exponential Organizations" conducted in 2017 and reported in our Summer edition (Issue 22) of the same year. Bringing up the back-of-the-book are Octara Programs in January and February 2021.

So mask up and sit tight! And Enjoy! 😊

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Let's Click & Play



A Public Service Message  
to Prevent COVID-19

game.stopdaspread.com

## INSIDE



### Generalist in an Age of Specialists

**Shahjahan Chaudhary**

Tech Entrepreneur, Venture Capitalist, Founder  
CEO at Assembly F & A Man for All Seasons  
Interviewed by Adil Ahmad



### TCS Octara's Webinar

**Corporate Communication & Your Brand**

**by Dr. Valerie A Bram**

Reviewed by Adil Ahmad



### OCTARA EVENTS FROM PAST

**Workshop on Exponential Organizations**

**by Dr. José Cordeiro**

(octara.com Newsletter Issue 22 - Summer 2017)

## Octara Programs in January & February 2021

January 21, 2021 via Zoom Meeting at 2pm GST | 3pm PKT

**FREE Webinar: Blue Ocean Strategy**

Speaker: **Dr. Raj Kumar**

January 26, 2021 via Zoom Meeting

Online Training: **Email Etiquettes & Business Writing Skills**

Facilitator: **Kanwal Akhtar**

February 10, 2021 via Zoom Meeting at 2pm GST | 3pm PKT

**FREE Webinar: Effective Brainstorming Techniques**

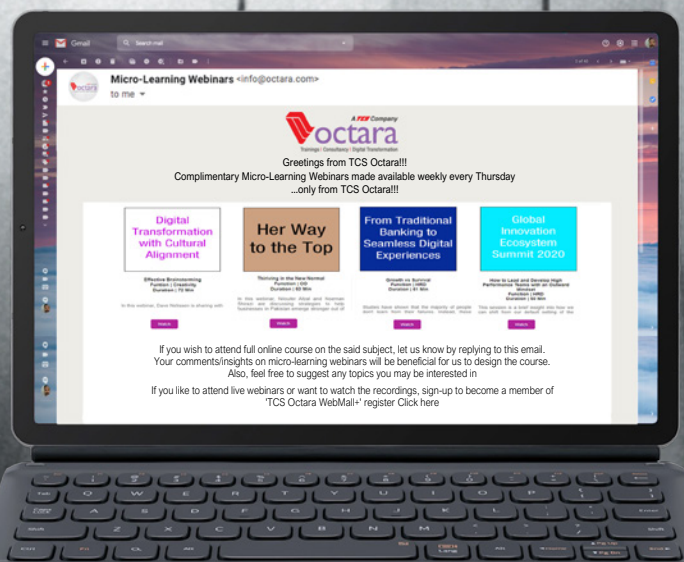
Speaker: **Dave Nelissen**

February 24, 2021 via Zoom Meeting at 2pm GST | 3pm PKT

**FREE Webinar: Effective Logistics Leadership for POST COVID Supply Chains**

Speaker: **Bob Forshay**

## Octara Calendar (January - February 2021)



# SHAHJAHAN CHAUDHARY

GENERALIST  
IN AN AGE OF  
SPECIALISTS

**Tech Entrepreneur,  
Venture Capitalist,  
Founder,  
CEO at "Assembly F" and  
A Man for All Seasons**

Sintra has welcomed a new resident in recent months. Shahjahan Chaudhary has moved to this resort town in the foothills of Portugal's Sintra Mountains. Sintra is not far from the capital Lisbon and a longtime royal sanctuary with its forested terrain studded with pastel-colored villas and palaces.

## "Assembly F" & DEMO50

Shahjahan Chaudhary has set up shop in Sintra and named it "Assembly F", an invite-only community of startup founders, developers and angel investors, and a platform to empower tech communities, enable startup founders and create a fast learning hub where the focus is on the common vision to improve lives and build a better planet for everyone. More power to such visionaries.

With a pool of 200+ angel and institutional investors based in the Middle East & North Africa, Singapore and Pakistan, "Assembly F" has rolled out Asia's Startup Roadshow DEMO50 for Pre-seed, Seed and Series A startups in the process of raising capital in the next 6 months. The next round for applicants closes on **5th February 2021** with the first Event scheduled for the **14th of March 2021** so tech entrepreneurs amongst our readers can plunge right in and get an idea of the requirements at the following links:-

**Startup signup:** <https://lnkd.in/eECPekN>  
**Investor signup:** <https://lnkd.in/ejmymh7>  
**Partner signup:** <https://lnkd.in/ehkFZZ3>



## Leveraging Sialkot

Shahjahan Chaudhary exults in blazing trails and cruising roads less travelled. His thinking is a powerful reminder that the essence of genius lies in its simplicity. For instance, he says that since we manufacture 70% of the world's footballs in Sialkot, why not turn Sialkot into the Disneyland of football, the 'mecca' of soccer as it were, and invite the world? All the stars from around the world would love to visit and pay homage to such hallowed grounds, and their fans will follow!



But to do that our mighty entrepreneurs in Sialkot and movers and shakers at the Tourism ministry in Islamabad will need to emerge from their silos and jealously guarded turfs, and engage in some old fashioned lateral thinking and the forging of alliances that yield win-win outcomes. Instead, what we did 'succeed' in doing some years ago was grabbing defeat from the jaws of victory by letting Sialkot's football industry become a disgraceful worldwide focus for child labour with accompanying boycotts, penalties and loss of business instead of being celebrated for its cutting edge craftsmanship and global excellence.

Octara.Com caught up with Shahjahan Chaudhary over the Internet and took the nickel tour of where all he has been and what all he has done in the short time that he has graced Planet Earth.

**octara.com:** Your MBA from IoBM in Marketing (with Distinction) had Brand Development along with Social Media Marketing and Brand Management as your primary areas of interest. Why has Pakistan failed in developing a prominent regional if not global brand?

**Shahjahan:** Everything starts with intention. Have we intended to build Pakistan into a global brand? I don't think so.

## Telling the Right Story

If you look at it from the perspective of the 220 million people who live here, this should be a top priority. The word "brand" has a very advertising-esque feel. But building a brand is not about advertising. The truth is that brand is all the ideas, images and experiences attached to your "name". Even if we don't "invest" in our brand and try to nudge it in a certain direction - it's still there and it's going somewhere. If we can connect our name as a country to the right ideas - 5 Great Mountains, the City of Gardens, the Hub of Tech - we will thrive. If we are connected to the wrong ideas - Money Laundering, Terrorism, Poor - we will suffer.

Brand is also a story - so we have to tell the right story to our people as much as we have to tell the right story to a global audience. Our people can be the best ambassadors of our country if they believe in our nation's mission.

**octara.com:** Having done your MBA in 2000 you became CEO of HOMEXPRESS in 2004. Where and how did you spend the intervening 4 years?

**Shahjahan:** I worked at The News for a while, wrote freelance scripts for Indus Vision and Indus Music (before it became MTV) and built a production company called Coffee Machine. I wanted to be an entrepreneur and build something when it wasn't fashionable.

**octara.com:** You sold your stake in HOMEXPRESS to a group of investors in 2010 that are profitably running it till date you say. Do you regret having made the sale? And how well has HOMEXPRESS transitioned into the digital age?

**Shahjahan:** We sold the business in 2010 and it was bought by Novair Farooqui and a group of investors. They were running it well for a few years till Novairs departure from the business. I'm not sure how well it is doing now.

## Silencing Voices of Sanity

**octara.com:** What value did you add to PeaceNiche (T2f) as its Board Member between April 2012 and April 2015?

**Shahjahan:** When Sabeen opened T2F it was across the street from my office on Ittehad. We became friends and co-hosted events like Startup Sunday and The Poet & The Pragmatist (about Iqbal and Jinnah). I loved going to that intellectual sanctuary Sabeen had built. T2F was an experiment in building a community hub for conversation & dialogue. Sabeen to me represented what this country could be.

Unfortunately that possible future was murdered in 2014. In that moment I realised how violence is ruthlessly used to silence voices of sanity in a mad place.

**octara.com:** Your 2 years spent with the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) must have given you a keen insight into what ails the tech industry restraining it from becoming a major contributor to Pakistan's quest for foreign exchange. Why has our InfoTech sector remained a boutique operation?

## Economic Tiger instead of Security State

**Shahjahan:** There are many reasons for the tech sector not achieving scale in Pakistan. While Pakistan suffered from a worsening security situation between 2001 and 2015, the rest of the world integrated into global value chains. The security situation has dramatically improved in 2020, but the hangover from those Lost Years keeps us behind our true potential. This is beginning to change now. Overseas Pakistanis are coming back and reconnecting with our ecosystem and regional investors from MENA and Far East are coming

too. We can expect great things in the next 5 years.

**octara.com:** And, as a self-styled tech entrepreneur and venture capitalist, what fixes would you recommend to remedy the situation?

**Shahjahan:** At a state level, we need to focus on becoming an Economic Tiger instead of a Security State. That will require re-imagining our brand, investing in our people and opening our borders for travel.

Our young population is our greatest asset. We should turn this raw material into globally employable talent. For that, we need to uplift our University ecosystem by committing to excellence. I don't think our professors are incompetent, they are simply responding to the incentive system as it is designed. And it is badly designed. So if we want to fix our Universities, we have to

"I believe as citizens we should engage in the affairs of the state. It is our duty. Unfortunately politics has become a dirty word"

create the incentives that will promote competence and excellence in our professors.

The size of our talent-force will determine the size of our economy. And that requires investment and long-term commitment.

**octara.com:** What made Taniya Aidrus to call it quits?

**Shahjahan:** I would have been surprised if she hadn't quit. She was given a task but was given neither the resources nor the political backing required to get it done. A similar mandate was given to Shababat Ali Shah at NITB, although with less fan-fare, as was given to Tania. As head of NITB, he had more resources but even he was lacking the political backing required to lead digitalization.

Our greatest issue is the governance framework. In the current framework, it is impossible to make radical change happen. The whole system is designed for stability and maintenance of the status quo. Our bureaucracy, led by Federal Secretaries, is playing defence all the time. The fact that even among bureaucrats the only people who get anything done have to go around the system shows you how broken the basic structure is.

## Recipe for Disaster

Tania quit because the system succeeded. In a poor country, constant improvement should be everyone's job description. We will make mistakes but we will get it right eventually. We are so afraid of making mistakes and scared of the National Accountability Bureau, we avoid making decisions and taking chances. This is a recipe for disaster.

The current government should shift its focus from merely eliminating corruption to "constantly improving service delivery by fine-tuning incentives for all stakeholders". That will require a new kind of vision and long-term commitment to excellence and competence.

**octara.com:** In your estimation is the Government School System beyond repair?

**Shahjahan:** Instead of looking at Government Schools as a broken system, we should look at ways to fix it. There is no way the private sector can provide for the needs of the vast majority in the country. About 4.5 million children study in the Government Schools of Sindh alone.

## Depoliticize, Decentralize, Incentivize

**I think there are four things needed to improve Government Schools:**

1. Depoliticize education because currently teachers are an election-winning asset and that must end;
2. Decentralize and empower districts to run their own educational systems instead of controlling it from provincial capitals.
3. Design a better incentive structure to empower teachers and principals.
4. Emphasize critical thinking, creativity and communication in school curriculums.

"Today's secret agent is a software programmer hiding in a basement"

**octara.com:** Having run Team::ants, Pakistan's pioneering Digital & Social Agency, and a very successful commercial venture for nearly a decade, what made you shut shop and switch tracks to set up the Karachi Citizen Lab, a seemingly not-for-profit organization?

*(The Karachi Citizen Lab is a Policy Think Tank that brings together experts from social development sector, civil society, academia, policy makers, corporate actors and public sector to discuss and formulate solutions to the challenges being faced by the city and its people along with providing a Space for Public Dialogue that allows for people from diverse backgrounds to sit together and talk about their experiences, ideas and suggestions to improve the city, and a Social Incubator that helps young social entrepreneurs and change makers bring their ideas to life).*

## Governance Chaos

**Shahjahan:** I believe as citizens we should engage in the affairs of the state. It is our duty. Unfortunately politics has become a dirty word. Also, Karachi's politics is not only dirty but violent. And it's also ethnic. So I wanted a platform where we could ask questions about city governance. What I learned in the process is that Karachi with a population equal to a couple of European countries does not have central management. It is governance chaos with competing powers fighting over turf and resources. If we want a liveable and vibrant Karachi, we must transform the way we govern and fund this city.

**octara.com:** Your work as Director National Incubation Center Karachi (NIC Karachi) again points towards altruistic motives rather than commercial, with the mission to unlock the power of innovation and ideas to transform Karachi into a livable and globally competitive city. What has brought about this paradigm change in your thinking? Have you, perhaps, made enough money in your earlier business ventures to last you a few lifetimes? If so, is running for public office a possibility in the not too distant future?

*(Funded by Ignite National Technology Fund of the Ministry of IT & Telecom, the National Incubation Center Karachi is the biggest incubator in the country's largest city. It's a partnership between LMKT, PTCL, HBL, PPAF and NED University).*

## More Frustration than Altruism

**Shahjahan:** It was more frustration than altruism that made me make this transition. I was frustrated with things not improving in my city and my country. Building NIC was an opportunity to look at our challenges as entrepreneurs and citizens with a bird's eye view. I must say that it was extremely revealing & I learned so much about why things don't work in Pakistan. I also got to hear hundreds of founders, multiple bureaucrats, enough politicians and common citizens to have a better grip on what's needed.





At the National Incubation Center Karachi with Shahzad Shahid (CEO, TPS), Imran Khan (CEO, Rapid Compute), Owais Zaidi (Executive Chairman, The Hive) and Omer Salimullah (COO, Sada Pay)



At the Oslo Innovation Week with Jehan Ara, President Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA)



Signing ceremony between NIC Karachi, Canada Pakistan Business Council & Rainbow Cloud Initiative



With Thomas Tsao (Founder, Gobi Partners) and Jamaludin Bujang (MD, Gobi Partners) at NIC Karachi



In conversation with Ali Zaidi, Minister Ports & Shipping at NIC Karachi



With the Swedish Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Ingrid Johansson



In San Francisco Bay Area with Khalid Raza (Founder, Viptela) and Bilal Ahmed (Co-founder, Grotabyte)



With friends Lubna Lakhani, Adil Moosajee, Munira Shabbir, Awab Alvi, Jehan Ara, Shahzad Qureshi and Faisal Kapadia



**octara.com:** As an Air Force kid you understandably moved around quite a bit, from one end of the country to the other. Did you feel disadvantaged changing schools so often?

**Shahjahan:** I feel privileged to have experienced so many places and making friends everywhere. Perhaps because of this background I'm comfortable with change, with making decisions and with taking "the road less travelled".

**octara.com:** You have described yourself as a city boy with village roots, an Air Force kid who wanted to be an entrepreneur and a politician, and a confident risk-taker who treads cautiously. How are you managing to reconcile these seemingly contradictory traits and desires?

**Shahjahan:** Life is full of contradictions and opposites: hot and cold, sky and earth, small and big. A lot of times it's your ability to reconcile these opposites that gives you the most cohesive and balanced views.

**octara.com:** You say that optimism is your greatest weakness and conspires against good timing. Please elaborate, especially in the light of our belief system which has mandated optimism as an article of faith.

**Shahjahan:** As an entrepreneur, I'm naturally optimistic. As someone who grew up with a global mindset, I felt ahead of time in a country that was left behind by changing times because of unique and unfortunate circumstances (Afghan War, Etc). By optimism as a weakness, I meant that I failed to make alignment between what was happening in the rest of the world and what was happening in my immediate environment. So I'm learning from my mistakes to do better in the future and fail less often.

**octara.com:** You call your ability to see patterns and predict the future your superpower. How do you leverage this superpower given the ban on fortune telling in our belief system?

**Shahjahan:** Seeing patterns is different from fortune telling. This is more based on reality and data; to be able to look at available data and come to a relatively accurate view of the future. Once you have this view, you can use it to make better decisions. It also helps in knowing which of your decisions will lead to what result.

**octara.com:** Your biggest dream you say is to reconcile religion and science in the Islamic world, to bring together spiritualism and rational thought, to combine tradition and progress. What leads you to believe that these are at odds with each other? And if they appear to be so then isn't it because of our limited comprehension, the antidote to which is life-long learning as prescribed by our

belief system?

## Massive Space for Improvement

**Shahjahan:** Correct; for a civilization to progress, it's the "collective belief" that matters - not the belief of one or a few individuals. Our current collective belief is not geared towards life-long learning; it's almost anti-reason; it doesn't see science as a way to know God. I think there is massive space for improvement especially in the Islamic world and I hope to contribute to this evolution.

**"Seeing the elephant as a whole is critical to finding our way forward. I'm happy being a generalist who is interested in math and art, theology and philosophy, physics and spirituality, politics and business, and more"**

**octara.com:** You have styled yourself a generalist in an age of specialists. But doesn't the former, the generalist, necessarily precede the latter?

**Shahjahan:** We have many people who can see the tail, the trunk and the foot of the elephant. But we have very few people who can see the whole elephant. Seeing the elephant as a whole is critical to finding our way forward. I'm happy being a generalist who is interested in math and art, theology and philosophy, physics and spirituality, politics and business, and more.

**octara.com:** What books appear on your current reading list? And what have constituted your hobbies?

**Shahjahan:** I'm re-reading Nelson Mandela's "Long Walk to Freedom", Simon Sinek's "The Infinite Game" and my regular reading of Quran. I have been partial to squash, cricket, cycling, and published a single issue magazine in school called The Misfits.

**octara.com:** Are you familiar with the Turkish TV Series "Dirilis: Ertugrul", and would you like to venture a comment on it?

**Shahjahan:** I think we should take inspiration from the "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad and the stories of Great Muslim Scientists like al-Khwarizmi instead. Would love to see and fund productions focusing on them.

**octara.com:** Sean Connery died recently, may the Almighty rest his soul in peace, amen. He was

regarded as the quintessential secret agent in the guise of Commander James Bond with the 007 license to kill. In our times defined by 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th generation warfare, how would you envisage the modern day secret agent?

**Shahjahan:** Today's secret agent is a software programmer hiding in a basement.

Thank You, Shahjahan Chaudhary! ■

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



Speaker  
**Dr. Valerie A Bram**  
BA(Hons) DipEd PhD MIOD

# Getting the Message Across

## PSYCHO-LINGUISTIC VALERIE TO THE RESCUE!

Towards the end of 2020 on the 16th of December, cognizant of the hit-and-miss COVID-19 messaging that the world appeared desperately grappling with in a dangerous game of 'Chinese Whispers', with fake news doing its worst to keep humanity fearful and off-balance, Octara brought onboard a heavyweight Specialist in Psycho-Linguistics, Dr. Valerie Bram BA(Hons) DipEd PhD MIOD for an hour-long free-to-attend on Zoom webinar for anyone who wanted to deepen their understanding of how language and psychology can transform corporate messages.

She explored how to Measure the delivery of your brand across all aspects of your corporate communication; Implement a strategy to close any gaps that emerge; Equip your teams with enhanced psychological and language skills; Remove barriers to essential changes that may be needed; and Measure the impact of improved communications on performance and profitability.

Dr. Valerie Bram is the founder and managing director of T2 Linguistics, and has 30 years of experience in worldwide consultancy. She has worked in Africa, America, Asia, Europe, Middle East and the UK. "Brands are unique and are designed to set organizations apart from one another," she says. "There is little point in investing in a brand if it is not reflected in all aspects of corporate behaviour and every facet of corporate communication."

One organization, one persona, and one voice

So all written and spoken messages should employ a range of sophisticated psychological and linguistic strategies that project the personality of a company, along with its values and attitudes which are carried in its distinct Tone of Voice is her advice on offer. "There should be one organization, one persona, and one voice."

Dr. Bram had with her in a supporting role Dr. Henry Fabian, former Board Director of Standard Chartered Bank responsible for HR worldwide and international consultant for 20 years along with being a registered clinical psychologist. The webinar gave examples of brands through their mission, vision and values; the gaps in their delivery, the obstacles in getting to their goals; and finally how to get

the organization to live the brand.

### Keep it Simple

The brand used to be the preserve of PR and Marketing but now everybody is talking about it. Forbes has developed a brand strategy centered on Personality, Attributes, Benefits, Positioning, Value and Vision. "The problem with corporate communications is that it must convey all of the above to both the external and internal customers. Stick to a core requirement of no more than 6 to 8 attributes. Don't try and do 15 or 20 to please everyone because it's going to be a failure," said Dr. Fabian, sounding a warning to keep it simple.

"Is it do-able? Everybody must own it. Is it aligned with what you want to achieve? Is it actionable? Can it be done? Is it practical? Does it have the necessary support? Is it correlated with the aims, goals, mission and vision? Can it be drilled into the system? Is everyone reading from the same hymn sheet?"

### Constantly Connected

Dr. Bram presented the world's Top 10 brands in billions of dollars according to Forbes:- Apple (\$241.2); Google (\$207.5); Microsoft (\$162.9); Amazon (\$135.4); Facebook (\$70.3); Coca-Cola (\$64.4); Disney (\$61.3); Samsung (\$50.4); Louis Vuitton (\$47.2); McDonald's (\$46.1).

"The fact that 7 out of the 10 companies are tech related shows our need to communicate and be constantly connected with each other, to retrieve and send information," she said. "The optimum age for tech savvy-ness is now 14. Our ability to communicate has become quite sophisticated, extremely fast and most of us can do it quite well."

### Raising Expectations

When companies don't live up to the expectations they generate through their proclamations then that is where trust slips and we become very disenchanted. For instance, the Mission Statement at



British Gas promises to “*Look after Your world*”; Amazon – We aim to be the Earth’s most customer centric company; Coca Cola – We aim to refresh the world in mind, body and spirit and inspire moments of happiness through our brands and actions; Disney – We aim to be one of the world’s leading producers and providers of entertainment and information. Big talk, that doesn’t always translate to action on the ground. Brand Management seeks to increase the organization’s perceived value to the customer and is difficult to measure and terribly subjective.

## Brand Gap

Dr. Valerie Bram and Dr. Henry Fabian discussed four case studies two of which were utilities in the UK and USA, one was a bank in the UAE and the last a government department in the UK. In all these cases the brand gap was immense but was successfully bridged once the company leadership took ownership and led from the front.

In the case of the UAE bank whose purpose was cited as “*to make banking better*”, and whose brand characteristics were described as innovative and forward thinking, and the persona of the brand as relationship focused, efficient, proactive, thoughtful, in tune with

*government agency which generally don’t have their PR and marketing sorted out. They clearly wanted to be trustworthy but were quite the opposite. They were traditional, extremely uncaring and unfriendly, immensely indifferent, insincere and impersonal, and couldn’t give a toss about anybody!”*

With support from the top Dr. Bram & Co launched what clearly appeared to be a ‘mission impossible’, but at the end of the project they had done extremely well on caring and friendly, did quite well on empathy, and moved three-quarters of the way on trustworthy.

*“Sincerity is a difficult concept to communicate and a hard one to know, but it definitely improved and closed the brand gap, but it required a very big push from the top right through the organization. But it is very doable. They won several awards as a result which is quite unusual for UK government agencies and departments.”*

## Net Promoter Score (NPS)

A lot of companies are measuring NPS, the Net Promoter Score which is a customer loyalty and satisfaction measurement taken from asking customers how likely they are to recommend your product or service to others on a scale of 0-10, but there’s a lot more to the story than that.

The 3rd case study is that of a USA Utility. They started off with a NPS score of 47 and in three months had gone up to 61 while 60 is considered world class. *“We released the latent talent within the workforce by getting permission for them to use the inherent skills they had and used in their private lives. In the commercial world organizations tend to stifle people.”*

## Astronomical Improvement

Then there was the UK Utility that’s worked across England, Wales and Scotland where the behavioral and cultural patterns are quite different, with Wales and Scotland wanting to assert their own separate identities. It has 6 sites and 4000 employees.

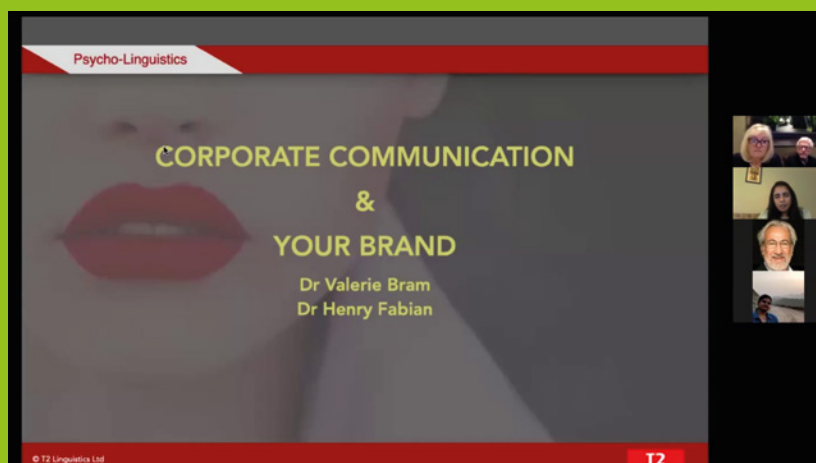
*“When we started they were at minus 33 NPS. We joined them at minus 20. We stopped measuring at 43, but apparently they went up to 65, which is an astronomical improvement.*

*But everyone was behind it, including the CEO. The directors sponsored the roadshows and briefed everybody, and the staff got behind it and got rewarded and recognized for the work they were doing.”* People who are self-aware and open to feedback will improve.

## Communications Equals Money?

The people at the top are generally accountants and they are interested in cost and revenue, says Dr. Valerie Bram. *“An average NPS increase of 7% correlates on average with a 1% growth in revenue. Advocacy drives growth says the London School of Economics. If we can just get the CEOs to realize that communications equals money then they might pay a bit more attention. But they tend to think it’s the product and the process where the money is.”*

When assessing a communication three questions need to be asked – what was its aim? What’s the best method of doing it, the best channel? Was it successful? *“It’s not just the answers to why the customer’s complaining that you have to deal with. If it gets out on social media it will damage the company’s reputation and reduce the trust. You have to recover your image and reputation and restore the trust, as well as give detailed information. You*



To watch recording of Octara’s webinar on our YouTube Channel “octaratrainings”

Click here: [https://youtu.be/xkZlrj\\_1rgY](https://youtu.be/xkZlrj_1rgY)

customers, conscientious, enthusiastic, and purposeful, after our review the bank came through as parental and authoritarian at the core and on the edges it was traditional, indifferent, impersonal, negative, threatening, judgmental, and controlling; Miles away from what it needed to be.

Ideally its tone of voice should have been grounded and plain speaking, down to earth, simple words, jargon free, modern phraseology, non-corporate language, emphatic, informal, and friendly. But in fact it was out-of-date language, verbose, corporate jargon, legal speak, complex, cold and formal, yielding a massive gap.

*“The companies that call us in are not poor companies, but good companies looking for incremental improvement,”* says Dr. Bram. *“Following this exercise a plan was drawn up to close the gap. The UAE is not unique in having a brand gap. It’s a universal phenomenon.”*

## Government Sector Redeemable

The UK Government Agency was the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), a monopoly with 45 million customers, and was in the process of digitization. *“They didn’t really have a brand being a*



# Advocacy drives growth says the London School of Economics.

## If we can just get the CEOs to realize that communications equals money then they might pay a bit more attention

*need to do some powerful emotional things as well."*

### Change Averse

Evolutionary psychologists say we as a species have a bias towards status quo and do not want to change if we can possibly avoid it. *"Tech quantum advances necessitate modernizing the language. Google and Harvard counted 1,500,000 words in the English language while people in call centers use a vocabulary of just 927 words."*

### Emotional Thinking is 5 Times Stronger than Rational Thinking

There are two types of thinking – rational (knowledge, competence, integrity, reliability, credibility, dependability) and emotional (empathy, security, beliefs, altruism, benevolence, good will). Most companies opt for rational thinking and the employees have expertise and specialization in the field. If companies opted for emotional thinking then the employees would act as if they valued the customer. It's always heart over head, and if the brand doesn't deliver that the customers go elsewhere.

How they feel can make your business or break it. On social media it's important to turn Likes into Love. Don't guess how people feel about your business. Let them tell you.

*"Latest neuroscience tells us how our brain processes words and information,"* says Dr. Bram. The core emotions Love and Happiness appear on the Positive side and on the Negative side there is anger, fear, sadness, disgust, and shame. The Neo-cortex is the rational or thinking brain while the Limbic is the emotional or feeling brain; The Reptilian is the dinosaur brain that manages our instinctive actions.

### Everything is Based Upon Emotions

*"Always take the emotional aspect into consideration about how people will feel about the message. Will it provoke the emotional response I want? Everything is based upon emotions. You get more emotional reactions from people than you get rational reactions."*

During research with MRI scanning machines scientists have discovered that words alone can actively trigger the pain center in

the brain. So corporate communication should try and avoid such words at all costs like 'unfortunately', 'delay', 'disappointed', 'we let you down'. Professor Tomas Weiss of the Jena University says that *"words alone are capable of activating our pain matrix, while the Shorter Oxford Dictionary says that use of words manage people's perceptions and influence their subsequent actions."*

### Body Language

Surprisingly 55% of all exchanges is non-verbal communication, 38% paralanguage, and just 7% words. *"Volume, Pace, Pitch and Tone command equal shares at 25% each, and Tone is where Attitude sits with 29 different tones that one can use."*

Not all messages will be equally formal or informal, nor equally friendly or unfriendly, nor equally sincere or insincere. *"It takes a bit of practice,"* says Dr. Bram. *"When delivering a brand give your staff the ability to be sophisticated communicators and flex the message depending on the customer, the circumstance, the medium, and the message."*

Giving an example of the phenomenal power of the consumer in the age of social media, Dr. Valerie Bram played a YouTube clip titled "United breaks guitars" made by a disgruntled music band in a unique style of complaining that cost United Airlines a \$180 million drop in share price as Penalty for not delivering the brand.

The good doctors Bram and Fabian were quite pleased with the Octara people they interacted with and had nothing but praise for the Octara brand in great part because it stressed going the extra mile, and learning and education which are superior brand builders instead of money and profitability.

### One Hour 20 Minutes Well Spent!

Although what Dr. Valerie Bram espoused was not exactly rocket science, it did constitute an essential revisit of premises that can make the difference between success and failure in enterprises across the board. With regard to body language there is the management philosophy of old standing that has remained top of mind throughout one's life and which recommends the carrying of a big stick while speaking softly. Indeed ■

Reviewed by **Adil Ahmad**, Correspondent, octara.com

# OCTARA EVENTS FROM PAST

Extracted from Octara.com Newsletter - Issue 22 / Summer 2017



"EXPONENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS should be for anyone interested in the ways Exponential Technologies are Reinventing best practices in business "

- Ray Kurzweil

## Creating the Future Organization

A one-day seminar held on March 15, 2017 in Karachi

# EXPONENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS

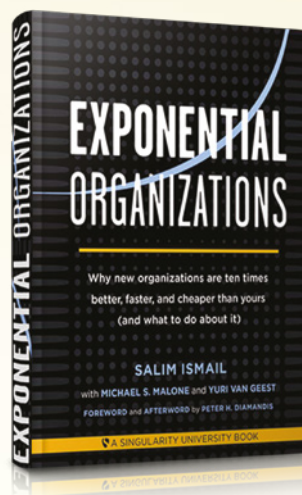
## *Futuristic Vision of Abundance*

Dr. José Cordeiro's (PhD, MBA)



At face value from a layman's perspective the good doctor has gone stark raving mad! 'Curing' death and making man 'immortal' are the sole preserves of those who have lost their minds. And yet, there he was, addressing an empowered segment of Pakistan's corporate leadership who was taking him very seriously.

For those of us who make it a habit to venture beyond our comfort zones, the signs have been there for a long time, too profound to contemplate for most people, much like alien visitations and the existence of Area 51. But Dr. Cordeiro has made it his passionate business and pastime to follow the world at its cutting edge, and



prepare the wider public for quantum growth enabled by exponential advancements in technology.

### Preparing for Exponential Organizations

Dr. Cordeiro engaged Octara's esteemed clientele at Karachi in full day workshops on Exponential Organizations based on the book by the same name co-authored by Salim Ismail, Michael S. Malone, and Yuri Van Geest which unveil years of research learning how organizations can accelerate growth with technology to achieve performance 10 times better than the competition.

José Cordeiro holds degrees in engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, Massachusetts, economics from Georgetown University, Washington, DC, management from INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France, and science from Universidad Simon Bolivar, Caracas, Venezuela.





He is chair of the Venezuela Node of The Millennium Project; founding faculty and energy advisor at Singularity University in Silicon Valley, California; founder of the World Future Society's Venezuela Chapter; co-founder of the Ibero-American Transhumanist Association; and former director of the Club of Rome (Venezuela Chapter), the World Transhumanist Association (Humanity+) and the Extropy Institute.

José is also invited faculty at the Institute of Developing Economies IDE – JETRO in Tokyo, Japan, the IE Business School in Madrid, Spain, and the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology in Russia. He has published more than 10 books in 5 languages, including the best-selling edition “The State of the Future” with The Millennium Project, and has appeared in programs with CNN, Discovery Channel and the History Channel, among many other international media interviews.

### **“In business, performance is key. In performance, how you organize can be the key to growth” – Dr. José Cordeiro**

“ExOs are perfectly fitted for the ASIAN region due to large amount of young people embracing its attributes!” says Dr. Cordeiro. “Today the only constant is change, and the rate of change is increasing. Your competition is no longer the multinational corporation overseas; it’s now the guy or gal in the Silicon Valley or Mumbai garage using the latest online tools to design and cloud print their latest innovation. But the question remains: how can you harness all of this creative power? How can you construct an enterprise that is as quick, adept and innovative as the people who will be part of it? How will you compete in this accelerated new world? How will you organize to scale? The

answer is to create the organization of the future - The Exponential Organization.”

In the past five years, the business world has seen the birth of a new breed of company - the Exponential Organization (ExO) - that has revolutionized how a company can accelerate its growth by using technology. “An ExO can eliminate the incremental & linear way traditional companies get bigger and leverage assets like community-big data-algorithms and new technology into achieving performance benchmarks ten times better than its peers.”

### **A world of abundance**

Welcome to a time of exponential change, the most amazing time ever to be alive, says the good doctor, his eyes ablaze with excitement at what he sees unfolding in the not too distant future. “Exponential Organizations will help you navigate the shifting business environment due to the introduction and proliferation of exponential technologies.”

Today’s organizations are built for a linear world: hierarchical, centralized, closed, top down and focusing on ownership due to scarcity of people, resources, assets and platforms. “They evolved one hundred years ago for an era of economies of scale and relative stability and predictability. Our environment is changing exponentially, mainly driven by exponential technologies and globalization. As a result, the world is becoming increasingly open and transparent and we are slowly moving from a world of scarcity to a world of abundance.”

Exponential Organizations lay the framework for organizations to adapt and thrive in a world of abundance by diving into new organizational structures that leverage exponential technologies and a shifting global business mindset. “Today, if you’re not disrupting yourself, someone else is. Your fate is to be either the disrupter or the disrupted. There is no middle ground,” says SALIM ISMAIL, Author of the book, Co-Founder and Chairman, ExO Works.

“The ExO Sprint solves the immune system problem. It removes the resistance of an organization to transform itself to the new Exponential Age,” adds FRANCISCO PALAO, Co-Founder and CEO, ExO Works, while Paul Polman, CEO, UNILEVER, says that he has found ExO concepts to be extremely valuable. “I’ve made the book required reading for senior management and we are implementing many of its principles ■”

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

*The Futurist, Dr. José was the Keynote Speaker of CFO Conference 2017 in Karachi & Islamabad and also delivered one-day workshop on Exponential Organizations in Karachi. He is exclusively working with Octara for his workshops in Pakistan.*

**For Inquiries, info@octara.com**

Listen to Dr. José Cordeiro talk about The Future of Technology at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YKkcUcSpMU&t=60s>

# BLUE VS RED

## OCEAN STRATEGY – WHAT'S NEW?

*Helping You Succeed!*



# Email Etiquettes & Business Writing Skills

January 26, 2021 | 10:00 am to 3:00 pm (Pak Time) via Zoom Meeting



Course Facilitator: **Kanwal Akhtar**

- Senior Consultant, Corporate Trainer and Keynote Speaker
- Visiting faculty member for Executive MBA and BBA programs at IBA, Karachi
- Successfully trained over 1000 professionals on Personal Effectiveness, Business Communication and Marketing
- Successfully trained participants from Allied Bank, Atlas Funds, Pakistan Suzuki, Lotte Chemicals, Coca-Cola, PARCO, Pakistan Cables, Standard Chartered Bank and more...

## COURSE OVERVIEW:

About four out of five business professionals admit that they are not able to draft persuasive and polite emails because of a lack of proper business writing skills. **"Email Etiquettes & Business Writing Skills"** is an online training that is a fast, fun way to get the essential writing skills professionals need to communicate clearly and confidently in everything they write on the job.

This training will focus on how to organize thoughts, get off to a quick start and then communicate persuasively in any scenario that requires communication to be established in the form of an email. It will enable professionals to streamline their business writing in various kinds of emails, make a persuasive point, while maintaining courtesy and professionalism.

The workshop will include, **"Practice Sessions,"** insightful brainstorming and discussions, team-work and constructive criticism.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Discover how to structure correct and powerful emails!
- Learn simple tricks for e-mail correspondence
- Safeguard your emails from careless errors through proofreading
- Save time and money by avoiding misinterpretations, numerous edits, and miscommunication in emails

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

This online training has been designed for employees and managers across organizations in need of learning or polishing their email writing skills.

Click here to Register : <http://bit.ly/39dhEKv>

## WORKSHOP INVESTMENT

**PKR 7,500/-**

+SST Per Participant

**(Group Discount Available)**

## Fee Includes:

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

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

## 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](mailto:sarim.atique@octara.com) or call at 0345-8949470

For registration & more details, please contact:

Sarim Atique at: [sarim.atique@octara.com](mailto:sarim.atique@octara.com), Mobile 0345-8949470

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Topic	D/s - H/s	Trainer	Month	Loc.
<b>January 2021</b>				
<b>FREE Webinar: Introduction to Blue Ocean Strategy</b>	60 min	Dr. Raj Kumar	21-Jan	Zoom
<b>Online Training: Email Etiquettes &amp; Business Writing Skills</b>	5-hours	Kanwal Akhtar	26-Jan	Zoom
<b>February 2021</b>				
<b>FREE Webinar: Effective Brainstorming Techniques</b>	60 min	Dave Nelissen	10-Feb	Zoom
<b>FREE Webinar: Effective Logistics Leadership for POST COVID Supply Chains</b>	60 min	Bob Forshay	24-Feb	Zoom
<b>Online Training: Social Media Marketing Tactics</b>	TBC	Dr. Frank Peter	TBC	Zoom
<b>Online Pre-recorded: Voice of Influence Masterclass</b>	6 hours	Lucy Cornell	TBC	Zoom
<b>March 2021</b>				
<b>Emotional Intelligence for Leadership Excellence</b>	TBC	John Bentley	Mar	TBC
<b>Negotiate to Win at Trade</b>	TBC	Atif Farooqui	Mar	KHI
<b>Management Masterclass</b>	TBC	Haseeb Hasan	Mar	KHI
<b>Effective Business Support Practices</b>	1	Zaufyshan Haseeb	Mar	KHI
<b>Upcoming Programs</b>				
<b>FREE Webinar: Protecting Financial Assets</b>	60min	Petros Geroulanos	TBC	Zoom
<b>Job Evaluation &amp; Grade Structures</b>	TBC	Robert Mosley	TBC	Zoom
<b>Designing Agile Organizations</b>	TBC	Frederik Haentjens	TBC	TBC
<b>Online Training: Digital Transformation with Cultural Alignment</b>	TBC	Uzma Aitqad	TBC	Zoom
<b>Performance Management</b>	TBC	Hussain Adenwala	TBC	KHI
<b>Managing Stress during Uncertain Times</b>	1	Usman Riaz Qazi	TBC	KHI
<b>Certificate in Maintenance Planning / RCM</b>	2	Ben Stevens	TBC	TBC
<b>FREE Webinar: Engage Remote Employees for High Performance</b>	TBC	Ayesha Tariq Sethi	TBC	Zoom
<b>Channel Management</b>	1	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Corporate Governance</b>	1	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Creativity &amp; Innovation using Design Thinking</b>	2	Rody Vonk	TBC	TBC
<b>Crisis Response and Communication Management</b>	1	Ben Pronk	TBC	TBC
<b>Corporate Etiquettes for Sales Professionals</b>	1	Ghaus A. Jafri	TBC	TBC
<b>Cyber Security Management</b>	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Enterprise Risk Management</b>	2	Philip Griffith	TBC	TBC
<b>Health Care Operation Management</b>	TBC	David Ben Tovim	TBC	TBC
<b>Key Account Management</b>	TBC	David Vachal	TBC	TBC
<b>Learning and Development Management Program</b>	2	Ian Thomson	TBC	TBC
<b>Measuring Return on Investment of Training</b>	1	Jack J Philips	TBC	TBC



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