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By Dr Victor S.L. Tan

THE POWER OF POSITIVE LEADERS



OPTIMISTIC leaders have a positive outlook towards their business and the future of their organisations. They are motivated to change things for the better. They believe in themselves and their team. They energise people to overcome challenges and win in the workplace as well as the marketplace. They play an effective role in bringing about positive growth, change and improvement for all.

In essence, great leaders embrace these five critical beliefs.

A BELIEF IN THE GOODNESS OF BUSINESS

The optimistic leader is committed to improve business as he believes in its goodness. To him the purpose of business is not just about making a profit. It is about serving people well. It is about selling products or providing services that solve problems for customers. It is about creating jobs and careers. To the optimistic leader, work brings a sense of achievement and satisfaction to employees. The workplace provides opportunities for people to build better relationships with one another. For him the purpose of business is to develop people, grow a company, improve the quality of life, build a nation and make the world a better place to live in. Two good examples are Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, two of the richest men in world who together are giving away more than US\$60billion (RM241 billion) of their money to charity through the Gates Foundation. The ultimate goal of



the foundation is to eradicate 20 leading diseases in the world. And that, unarguably, is goodness in business.

A BELIEF IN THE POTENTIAL OF PEOPLE

The optimistic leader truly believes that people are the key assets of the organisation. When spending money on training, he views it as an investment rather than a cost. He appreciates the differences in people and seeks ways to bring out the best in people. He gives opportunities for people to achieve great things. He sees his job as helping remove limitations to enable people to excel in their work. He encourages people to strive for excellence as he believes in the potential of people.

A BELIEF IN THE COMPANY'S VISION OF A BETTER FUTURE

An optimistic leader is neither

impeded by an unfavorable past, nor is he overwhelmed by current challenges. He is not afraid of future uncertainties. He believes that the best way to predict the future is to create it. He goes about envisioning a better future. To an optimistic leader the future of his company is as bright as he desires it to be. The achievement level of his company is as much as he wants to mobilise his team to achieve. Instead of worrying, he takes the necessary actions with his team to create a better future for the company and everyone.

A BELIEF IN THE BENEFITS OF CHANGE

The optimistic leader is a resilient leader who is willing to adapt to changes. He uncovers blind spots by constantly seeking for areas for improvement. He is not afraid to question outdated assumptions. He is aware that the number one enemy of success is complacency. He sees the need to change even in good times. He has no qualms about getting rid of unproductive ways of doing things ingrained by years of old

habits. He knows that to get people to change they must first change their attitude towards change itself. He gets people to believe in the benefits that come with change. With positive responses to change, a company will improve its innovativeness, cost effectiveness, productivity and competitiveness. This in turn, ensures the survival and sustainable success of the company.

A BELIEF IN THE VALUES OF GOOD ETHICS

The optimistic leader looks beyond profits. Success to him is about ethical achievement based on professionalism and good values. He is positive about the benefits of good business ethics. Good ethical practices actually enhances company image, reduces risk and cost, increases productivity and improve business for the company. He believes success is only sustainable when a company practices ethical values in doing business. A good example here is Public Bank Bhd under the able and ethical leadership of Tan Sri Teh Hong Piow. The bank has to date an unbroken track record profits of over 48 years and the bank is rated as one of the most transparent in the industry.

In today's business environment with increasing complexities and uncertainties, we need more optimistic leaders who have a positive attitude towards work, customers, competitors, colleagues, the company and as well as good corporate ethics; all of which are good for business.

Leaders who want sustainable success must indeed embrace these five critical beliefs.



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