



NEW STRAITS TIMES

MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2018

kllassifieds

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

digital edition



http://subscription.nstp.com.my

1300 22 6787

www.1k.com.my | 1300 808 123 (Local) | +603 2299 6000 (International)

by Rowena Morais

That is a powerful way of looking at your role within the company and of understanding what it means to lead. Tom Asacker has a rounded perspective on these issues, having a breadth of business development, marketing, management and operational expertise from prior managerial posts at GE as well as his entrepreneurial experience as a co-founder and President of a high-tech medical device company. In this interview with Tom, he shares what leadership involves, what it means to communicate with impact and authenticity and what being a strategic thinker is about.

As a teacher and strategic advisor to organisations and as someone who has started and led a business, what do you believe leading involves?

Tom: Leading is a simple, yet much misunderstood concept. It's about defining a vision of the future based on a deep understanding of how the world presently exists, and how you imagine it should exist. And then it's about communicating clearly, frequently and passionately, through both words and actions, in order to connect people with that vision in a powerful and motivating way.

How does someone become a more strategic thinker? What are some of the thought processes a person should undergo to achieve this?

Tom: To be a strategic thinker means to fully recognise, consider and choose the best available ideas and actions, over time, in order to achieve a motivating vision. Since success in organisations is the result of a mutually beneficial exchange of value, the most important thought process is one that fosters deep empathy for your audience and relentlessly seeks out innovative approaches to help them achieve their desires in the context of your overall vision.

The corporate world is full of contradictions in terms of leadership role models, which means to say, that there are all kinds of leadership models. With that in mind, how best should a person lead taking into account their own personality and cultural context?



Tom: Einstein said, "It is the theory

Tom Asacker writes and teaches about radically new practices and ideas for success in times of uncertainty and change. He is the author of critically acclaimed books including his latest, *The Business of Belief*. A popular speaker, he lectures to corporations, associations, and university audiences around the world, and works confidentially with executives and management teams at a number of top companies. Visit tomasacker.com for more.



How HR Can Become a More Strategic Thinker and Leader

which decides what we can observe." People need a theory of leadership, a metaphor, that allows them to observe and evaluate their own behaviour, and which informs their decisions and actions. My theory is simple: Leaders are Sherpas. The root of the word "lead" means "to go forth, to travel." Great leaders are simply great guides on other people's trips.

Are there habits that you believe can help HR develop particular skills?

Tom: Let's stay with the Sherpa metaphor. What makes someone a great guide? A few things: First, they know the terrain and the culture and so they know how to prepare the route and the logistics. But more importantly, they listen to, and work with, the climbers. They support them, keep them moving and on track, and remove obstacles. They don't talk much. And they don't stop to convene countless meetings. They allow the climbers to reach the summit through their own skill and will, successfully and safely. HR should look at their behaviours through that humble, servant lens.

HR's success is heavily dependent on how they interface with both leadership and the talent within the

organisation. How do you suggest that HR communicate in a way that drives the greatest impact and in a way that enhances engagement?

Tom: Assuming that a clear vision exists and that everyone understands his or her role in achieving it, including how to simply and objectively measure progress, HR should relentlessly ask: How can we help make you and your people smarter, faster and happier through the creation, modification and elimination of various forms of communication, systems, policies, training, et al.? And once you've received the input, and with a clear understanding of your audience and the environment, go out and make it happen!

How do you analyse your efforts in order to assess what works and what does not, how long to keep going at a project and how soon to pivot?

Tom: Look at your efforts through the lens of your vision, your journey, and ask yourself: Am I uniquely adding value? And if you can't describe precisely how your project adds value, both to your internal audience and your external audience, then pivot. That said, you must also keep yourself honest by having your audiences

validate your assessment through their expressed words and actions.

How can HR discover whether they are filling their days with the wrong kind of activity? What should they look out for?

Tom: They should be strategic thinkers and recognise that their actions, and those of others in their organisation, are what produce the results of the organisation. So instead of fighting the existing reality, instead of trying to change people's minds, they should figure out how to change the design of the organisation. The great systems theorist and designer Buckminster Fuller put it this way: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." HR should be helping to design new, innovative models of learning and collaboration that unleashes the organisation's creative energy and inspires people to set and pursue big goals.



Editor and Programme Director at VerticalDistinct.com, a media and learning organisation, Rowena Morais focuses on curated learning, communication and content. An editor, LinkedIn profile writer, and most recently, a TEDx speaker, she supports Human Resource and Technology professionals in their career development through articles, podcasts, interviews and a range of internationally accredited, in-demand technical and professional courses offered throughout Asia Pacific and the Middle East. Tweeting at @rowenamoraiss, she is a ghostwriter and can be found at rowenamoraiss.com. Rowena runs monthly meetups for Thrive Kuala Lumpur, a networking and support group for career women. For more info, visit meetup.com/Thrive-Kuala-Lumpur

INSIDE : SEARCH AND BOOK
Find now!

AUTO
Cars
Trucks
Bikes
Batteries
Mechanics

NOTICES
Financial
Tenders
General Notices

GENERAL
Services
Loans
Health
Renovations

PROPERTY
Land
Shoplots
Apartments
Room
Rental

APPOINTMENTS
Full/Part-time
Training
Graduate Scheme

GOVERNMENT
Jobs
Tenders
Legal

LEGAL/AUCTION
Property
Vehicle
Legal