

MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP: MANAGERSHIP

Leadership is a desired behaviour and trait that is sought in corporations and institutions. However, many of us inadvertently place great emphasis and focus on leadership, in particular “heroic” leaders, often forgetting that in reality, outstanding leaders stand on the shoulders of excellent managers. Where would leaders be without managers?

Dr Wilson Tay

Much has been written about leadership and there are many definitions of leaders and leadership. From the management perspective, leadership can be seen as a desired individual trait and behaviour that is sought after in firms, institutions, corporations and community. Everyone from the chief executive to the tea lady is regarded as a “manager” as we all have to manage time, activities and resources.

In the role of managing, we look for the characteristic and behaviour of leadership to achieve superior performance. Whilst it is important to recognise and encourage leadership, over the last decade there has been too much emphasis and focus on leadership, in particular “heroic” leadership, while “servant” leaders are often forgotten.

These servant leaders are the true Level 5 leaders who go about achieving great results in their organisations or community in a quiet, low profile and unassuming ways. These manager leaders practise “managerial leadership” or “managership” and achieve great outcomes because they enlist their fellow

“... We also need to tell the tales and achievements of our unsung heroes - the managers of yesterday, today and tomorrow.” ...

managers to work with them to pursue a common mission toward a shared vision. These leaders become successful and outstanding because of the support of their team of competent managers. When asked of these leaders, they would acknowledge that they rely and stand on the shoulders of the great managers that they have. No great leader can achieve a superior outcome on his or her own.

Leaders and managers are not necessarily separate personalities or entities as some writers might assert. Great leaders are also excellent managers and vice versa. Leadership roles are more often bestowed upon those who have been excellent managers during their career journey. Hence, leadership and managership have a symbiotic relationship like Yin and Yang. When called to lead,

the leader’s management role will be delegated and undertaken by others in the team. It often depends on the situation. A fellow worker could be a good situational leader if he or she has the skill, knowledge or capability to resolve a problem when his or her superior is unable to lead in a particular point in time or in an extenuating situation. If a group of people were lost in the jungle and the chief executive does not have the navigating skills to get out of the jungle, an ordinary worker who has the ability to get the group out of the jungle would be called to lead in this situation. Sir Winston Churchill was a great leader in times of war. However, in time of peace he was not as effective as some other British leaders. In the annals of history, we have seen many instances where heroes and

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Dr Wilson Tay addressing CEOs on “Managership”

leaders became great because of situations where their talents and capabilities make them effective leaders.

As the social and business environment becomes more globalised and turbulent amid rapid changes, there is now a renewed management clarion call for managers in corporations, institutions and communities to pursue and promote “managerial leadership” or “managership” through continuous professional development and life-long learning. The art of excellent managership is to learn faster than the rate of change that is taking place all around us. As Professor Gray Hamel has often articulated, “We are becoming ignorant at an accelerating speed.”

Management vs Managership

Management is traditionally defined as the function and general practice of planning, organising, leading and controlling. On the other hand, management leadership or managership describes the personal mastery of the art, science and practice of these management functions. It encompasses the relevant competencies to perform the management functions accompanied by leadership traits and behaviour. Like the definition of leadership, it describes the professional mindset and practice of strategic visioning, achievement of effectiveness, efficiency and excellence in how managers go about in performing their daily management functions and accountabilities to achieve distinctive and outstanding results.

Eight principles of managership

The professional practice of managership is guided by eight underlying principles:

- Firstly, the recognition that leadership and management are mutually inclusive and symbiotic.
- Secondly, managership is dynamic and permeable, and should be cultivated and institutionalised as a pervasive behaviour throughout all levels of the organisation, not necessarily expected and manifested only in senior management.
- Thirdly, managership can be developed, taught and learned through programme (content), action (process) learning and coaching.
- Fourthly, managership is based on the personal mastery and development qualities of Values, Attitude, Knowledge, Skills and Capability (Leadership, Communication and Ability).
- Fifthly, managership is the proper use of referent (influence), authoritative (compliance) and expert (technical) powers to develop and get the best in people.
- Sixthly, competent managership is the entitlement of every employee as managers are remunerated and empowered to be responsible for leading and making changes for improvement.
- Seventhly, excellent managership is the requisite, performing credential and characteristic for building local and global leaders.
- Eighthly, managership for all organisations is the new management paradigm for the 21st century to meet the new knowledge-based economy’s challenges, recognising regional and global impact and opportunities.

Why managership in Malaysia?

Malaysia has come a long way, from the labour-driven days of its agriculture era in the 1960s and 1970s, to its investment-driven industrial era in the 1980s, followed by the productivity-driven technology era in the 1990s, leading to the knowledge era of the 2000s today. Different economic eras require different managerial leadership competencies. In this respect, Malaysian managers have been trained and developed to meet these competencies requirements of the transforming economic eras.

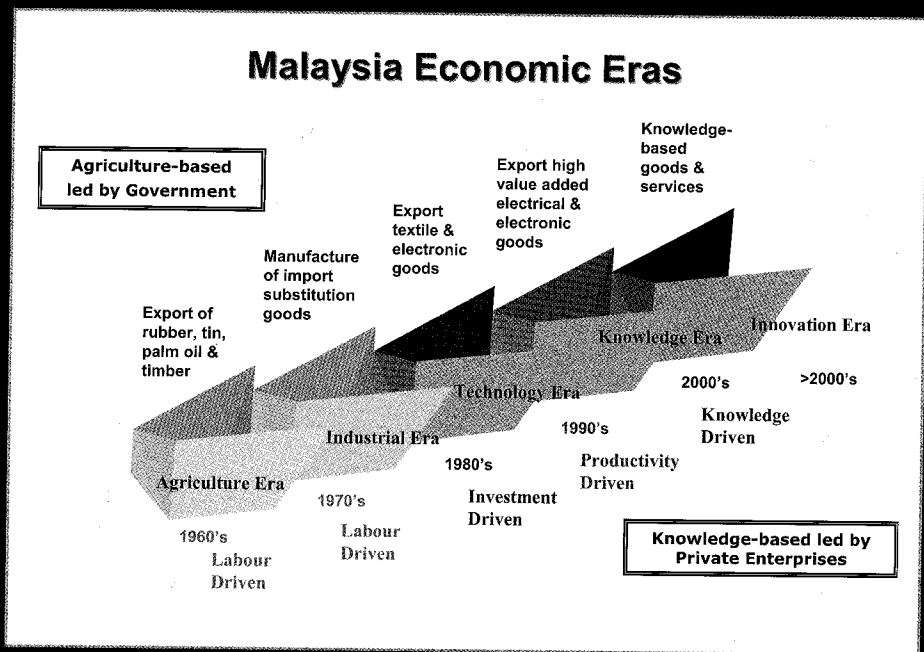
As we now undergo transition into the knowledge-based economy, we see the emergence and need to have a pool of highly skilled knowledge workers especially in the high technology, ICT and knowledge related industries engaged in enterprises such as software engineering, internet-based,

telecommunication, nanotechnology and biotechnology. These knowledge workers are very mobile and lifestyle-orientated. They are a new breed of talent workers that need to be developed as competent managers of future and emerging industries.

Surrounding and contributing to this fast changing phenomenon are evidence of global turbulence manifested through foreign commercial colonisation and investment and the modernisation of China through their leapfrogging and competitive strategies arising from their low costs advantage. We also see the convergence of technologies including disruptive technologies, which lead to creative destruction, innovation and disintermediation resulting in new entrepreneurial ventures such as the likes of software giants Microsoft Corporation, Oracle and Sun Microsystems as well as the successful world wide web players like Amazon.com, Google.com, e-Bay, Skype and many others.

In addition to globalisation, internet connectivity, rapid communication and borderless trade phenomena, the leveraging of knowledge through knowledge sharing, access, management and self-directed e-learning offer further evidence of the speed and scale of global connectivity and accelerated learning of people that is taking place everywhere. The world is now a global village.

Global turbulence, disruptions and innovations will present threats and opportunities. It will be threats and downfall for those who are complacent and basking in their past successes, and opportunities for the new players in the new era of constant business quicksands and paradigm shifts. The rule of the new game is that when a business paradigm shifts like the advent of the Internet or the arrival of a new disruptive technology, everyone goes back to zero or the starting line as past successes do not guarantee future successes. Hence, the future business environment will be challenging for the uninitiated and will demand greater managerial learning, competencies and leadership in managers of today and tomorrow - if their enterprises and



organisations are to be resilient, relevant and rewarding.

Traditionally, the frontiers of management have focused on supervisory or frontline management; general management; strategic management; operations management; marketing and sales management; financial management; and human capital management. But now, the new frontiers of management have come to include risk management, knowledge management, supply chain management, customer relationship management, project management, supplier relationship management, activity-based management, balance scorecard management, stakeholder management, enterprise resource planning, business continuity management, succession planning management, cross border management, innovation management and total quality management. The manager of today and the future will be a different breed of people needing to practise excellence in managership if we are to be a nation of great managers in order to ensure our industries are highly productive, competitive and resilient.

Purpose of managership

So what then is the role of managerial leadership or managership? Among the

purposes and desired outcomes of managership are:

- To enhance performance, productivity, profitability and value;
- To manage future threats or capture opportunities in the K-economy; to deal with the impact of globalisation and competition;
- To build knowledge assets and collective intellectual capital;
- To build home grown talents and create new mindsets, collaborative and learning culture for knowledge workers;
- To inculcate and promote innovation and creativity, and entrepreneurship;
- To be constantly looking beyond and re-inventing business rules and business models;
- To train, develop competent managers for the current and future industries

The Malaysian Institute of Management's national charter and challenges will require MM to be innovative and forward looking to prepare Malaysian workers and the present and future generation of managers to be able to competently handle and manage these new dynamic challenges - if we are to navigate our way to compete successfully and to achieve our Malaysia 2020 vision of becoming a developed nation.□