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Being a Leader is not Easy • Gilbert W.K. Lau

Good Leaders...and...Bad Leaders

I remember a few years ago, in the film "A World Without Thieves" starring Andy Lau, the leader of the group of thieves "Uncle Lai" said, "In the 21st century, people are the most invaluable assets." In fact, it is very hard to find a good leader. This is especially true in the logistics industry. You may ask why? In fact, it takes a long time to nurture competent leadership. It requires a continuous dedication to "Deliberate Practice". In the logistics business, where the variability of operations is huge, there is a greater need than in other industries to be resilient, careful and persistent in order to succeed. Also, a leaders needs to have the ability to play a multitude of roles, such as a "coach", "teacher", "guide", "friend" and "parent". The problem is, it is impossible for everyone to be a leader. Some people are naturally timid, and prefer to be led rather than to stand up and lead others.

You may wonder whether people who are naturally "bossy", "nosy" and inclined to stand "against injustice" naturally become leaders. Indeed, many educators and psychologists agree that people with these traits also have an innate talent for leadership. These people, in essence, are not afraid to speak their thoughts in front of others. They are not afraid of facing conflict. Indeed, leadership itself involves settling all kinds of conflicts of interest. That's something inevitable. Yet, it is uncertain whether these people can always be an effective leader for everyone out there. They could just as likely become another "Bus Uncle" (* the older man seen in a viral video clip, quarrelling on a Hong Kong bus in April 2006) and argue with others in public. Typically, they might say, "you have an issue, but I have an unresolved issue too..." This leads to the question, "How does a person come to be regarded as a good leader then?" From the point of view of the general public, I am convinced that someone in a top position, but who does not make a contribution to society, should not be regarded as a good leader.

In the July 2013 issue of Reader's Digest (the Chinese version), there was an interview with the former South African President Nelson R. Mandela, where he was asked: "Who in the international community is someone that you would like to meet but that you've never met?" Mandela replied: "There are many people in the world are not in a prominent position, but they still make a huge contribution to society. They may be obscure, but once you understand them and the contribution they make to life, you will not forget them. The selfless dedication of these unsung heroes should be awarded with our heartfelt admiration. In reality, we should look at a person's contribution to society, rather than his social status."

A related special report, published in the April 2014 issue of the American magazine "Fortune", selected the World's 50 Most-Eminent Leaders. It's true that most of the persons selected were political leaders in different countries, or were businessmen from renowned multinational corporations. Yet, their leadership qualities were similar. Former US President Bill Clinton said in an interview, "a leader is someone who can unite people to work together, to pursue common goals through careful planning. A leader never gives up until he/she reaches their goal...A leader must have insight into the challenges and opportunities present, respond appropriately, and clearly state his/her vision and coping strategies."

In fact, there is no standardised formula in the world for selecting a leader. But, as far as my own personal point of view is concerned, a leader must possess the essential ability for "Transformational Leadership", and be able to provide positive motivation to achieve appropriate changes, so as to lead a group to move forward towards a better future.

So then, now you may ask, "What is a bad leader?" There is often a "running-in process" after assuming a leadership role. A leader may not necessarily be able to revive a situation right from the beginning, but at least the leader should not cause any irrevocable damage, or lead his group into a decline, even at the outset.

Before talking about the specific qualities a leader should possess, and how these qualities can be nurtured, let me first talk about my views on what constitutes a bad leader:

- **Poor Execution -**

A bad leader is someone who knows which direction they should be headed in, yet does not actually take any actions. He/she never effectively implements a planned strategy, or worse still, even turns a blind eye to opportunities. I don't normally talk about politics, yet recently, there have been two topical social events in Hong Kong and Taiwan that are worth mentioning. They show us two examples of different kinds of leadership – one good, one

bad. The good one is seen in the "Anti-Service Trade Agreement" movement (a.k.a. the "Sunflower Student Movement") initiated by Taiwanese university students. Their leading figures, Lin Fei-fan and Chen Wei-ting, as well as many other students took prompt action to convey their views and values. These were covered by the Taiwanese media, and immediately the people of Taiwan could understand the core issues and were willing to partake in this civil disobedience action. As a result, the Ma Ying-jeou government had to abrogate the Trade Agreement bill. A leader should start from their beliefs and take action. As the saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words", and in a leadership position, it's simpler and more straightforward to turn ideas into actual actions.

An example of bad leadership is seen in the "Occupy Central" movement in Hong Kong. There has been a "rehearsal" and various group discussions that have now lasted for more than a year without any specific actions actually being taken (as of 27 June 2014, when this article was published). This is a typical case of "scholarly discussions and politics". As the organisers have miscalculated their timings and missed their best opportunity, any action is now doomed to failure. The organisers of the occupation movement have not been responsive enough, and to me, they are indecisive and narrow-minded. There are countless other reasons that I see the movement as a failure, but I'm not going to go into detail!

When you search for the keywords "leadership qualities" on-line, you can easily find thousands of different definitions. Yet, according to my view, a good leader should possess the following key qualities:

- **Determination –**

Determination is something that is accumulated from an array of experiences. It's the development of a kind of never-give-up spirit, amid endless trials and errors. Some people may ask, "Is there a fast track to determination?" I am convinced that determination is something cumulative. It is the essence that is drawn from many travels through times of both failure and success. It is impossible to develop determination without making many mistakes, and if one lacks experience. Later, I will talk about George P. Mitchell, who is a good example of this. A competent person should have the courage to make a suitable decision, and then execute a correct and sound strategy, despite any criticism they might face.

As the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once said, "After almost any major operation, you feel worse before you begin to convalesce. But you should not refuse the operation." Someone who simply aims to please people can only be a politician, but can

never be a leader, because they do not have the essential commitment and determination.

- **Vision -**

The world is becoming increasingly complex and difficult to understand. It has become almost impossible to make judgements based solely on the information that is presented. Moreover, our ears and eyes are bombarded by an excess of information, and are obscured by the huge flow of real-time information on the Internet. Therefore, the ability simply to obtain information is no longer a leadership advantage; on the contrary, a leader should thoroughly and quickly identify the things that others do not see, deal effectively with that information, and then turn it into something that helps with your decision-making. We can say that the key leadership quality should be an ability to process information.

- **Correction Capability –**

It is written in "Analects of Confucius" that "A gentleman's errors can be likened to an eclipse of the sun and moon. When he errs, the whole world sees it; but when he reforms, the whole world looks up to him." A leader who learns from his/her mistakes and makes changes accordingly is very much respected by others. At Margaret Thatcher's funeral in Britain, the Bishop of London mentioned in his obituary that not long after Mrs. Thatcher had been sworn in as Prime Minister, she received a letter from a nine-year-old boy named David. He wrote: "Last night when we were saying prayers, my daddy said everyone has done wrong things except Jesus; I said I don't think you have done bad things because you are the Prime Minister. Am I right or is my daddy?" Margaret Thatcher wrote back to him remarking: "However good we try to be, we can never be as kind, gentle and wise as Jesus. There will be times when we do or say something we wish we hadn't done and we shall be sorry and try not to do it again." Nobody is perfect and it's inevitable to make mistakes in life. What matters is the courage to face our own wrong words and deeds, bear the responsibility, learn the lesson, and avoid making the same mistake again.

- **Self-Discipline -**

The logistics industry is all about teamwork. A logistics practitioner cannot achieve things alone, or by playing petty tricks that will eventually be exposed. Instead, a leader should establish market confidence in the "Oriental Logistics" brand, build team management capabilities, and expand the ERP information system in an organized, systematic, disciplined and high quality manner. Different professionals should be grouped together at different stages to further developments and to explore different strategies, and it is necessary for the leader to start this process with himself. The Chinese believe that "if a leader sets a bad example, his subordinates are likely to follow suit." Therefore, we require

our leaders to practise absolute self-discipline, and to act seriously in the face of adversity. Indeed, self-discipline should form a large part of leadership self-cultivation.

- **Humility -**

This has a special meaning for me. I am convinced that no matter how much we achieve, we must be humble in order to win the respect of others. In fact, I've named my son "Hok Him" in Cantonese, which literally means "learn to be humble". I want him to understand this quote from the Taoist text Tao Te Ching: "What is most perfect seems to have something missing; yet its use is unimpaired...The greatest skill seems like clumsiness, the greatest eloquence like stuttering." (translated into English by Arthur Waley, 1934). In essence, it is trying to say that even if a task has been done meticulously, there will still be flaws, however negligible they may be. And even if you are right, try to be forgiving. As mentioned in my previous article, one has to be humble in order to win people's hearts (and hence good opportunities). If someone asks you: "What do you think are your greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses?" then it shows the right kind of attitude if you answer: "Well, I have a lot of weaknesses but I don't think I've got many strengths."

The job of a leader includes voicing opinions concerning all of the issues in a particular environment. In a way, a leader takes up the function of an "auditor", and should certainly be nit-picky about everything. A leader should uphold the highest quality requirements, and abide by the established rules in a persistent manner. The team should be motivated to make concerted efforts to meet all of the requirements. But when there is an irrefutable mistake, whether it is caused by an internal reason or otherwise, we should show our willingness to admit the problem, and promptly lead our team to make improvements accordingly, and have the courage to remedy the situation. This is how a leader can demonstrate his/her grace and self-knowledge.

As Gong Er (played by Zhang Ziyi) in the film "The Grandmaster" points out, "However high the level of martial arts you have achieved, it can never be higher than the sky; However profound your knowledge is, it can never rival the earth's" - meaning that we should be modest, even when faced with a challenge.

- **Optimism -**

A leader should be forgiving and understanding. Yet, there may be times when he/she is misunderstood. In the face of groundless accusations, a leader should remain open-minded in order to see all aspects of the problem. If something is wrong, people will deny it. If something is right, people will affirm it. But nobody can change what is right, while

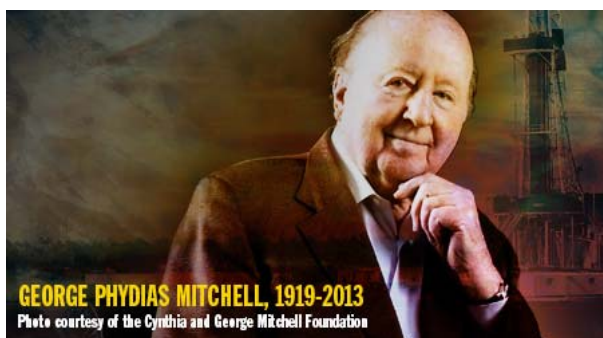
something that is wrong may remain there for a period of time, but it will definitely not last forever. The truth will always overcome falsehood; it's simply a matter of time. We should understand that a fact can never be manipulated. After all, we can't really hide the truth. A tiny failure today does not necessarily translate into what will happen tomorrow, so we should look at things in the longer term. This kind of unbiased attitude will help us advance slowly but surely on our pathway to a successful life.

Entrepreneurs Are Natural Leaders

After our discussion of the differences between a good and a bad leader, let's look at the qualities that differentiate a leader from rest of the crowd.

In fact, entrepreneurs are all true leaders. Not only do they need to unite people to approach work with the same philosophy and competences, but they also need to do whatever they can to resolve any problems. Surely a successful entrepreneur will possess the qualities of a good leader.

In a previous article, I mentioned that "Mediocrity" is caused by a deficiency in two elements, "Knowledge" and "Attitude". The acquisition of knowledge should not be a problem amid the proliferation of information on the Internet today. A greater problem lies only in whether there is a positive attitude to the pursuit of knowledge, and a positive attitude is a basic necessity. However, even this is not enough on its own. To be a successful entrepreneur, one also needs to have two other, even more crucial elements – namely "Vision" and "Determination".



George P. Mitchell, who recently died at 94 years old, was an important figure who changed the dynamics of the world's energy market thanks to his persistence. The news of his death caught my attention. What distinguished him from the rest of his competitors was that he had a very firm will. This American ignored the industry's generally pessimistic regarding "shale gas" (and even his colleagues were against him at times). Everyone believed that "shale gas" could not be successfully commercialized, due to high development costs.

Mitchell ignored these criticisms, and fully devoted himself to continuously improving and developing the required technology. For a long time, he was the only person convinced that it

would ultimately be successful. After 17 years, Mitchell finally found a way to exploit "shale gas" at a low cost, and was hailed as the "Founding Father of Fracking". This led to a revolution in the natural gas industry, which has not only changed the situation of the US energy market, but has also created far-reaching effects in terms of global geopolitics. Coincidentally, China is top-ranked in the world when it comes to the "recoverable reserves" of this kind of natural gas. In 2001, he sold his company "Mitchell Energy" for US\$ 3.5 billion. Mitchell earned his final victory solely because of his own perseverance, and in the subsequent decade, he has been able to fully devote himself to charitable undertakings for the well-being of local communities.

Mitchell's example illustrates the fact that entrepreneurs may be faced with difficulties along their journey. They need to possess extraordinary self-confidence and perseverance, and while everyone around is saying "no", an entrepreneur carries on and presses ahead with their own beliefs. This is indeed an extraordinary kind of quality. Mitchell's success was a result of "Vision" plus incomparable "Determination". These two traits are not something that the average Joe can easily access. "Determination" alone may not necessarily lead to a great achievement. Yet, when coupled with a unique "Vision" that sees the opportunities that other people cannot see, "Determination" may bring about tremendous success. One should note that Mitchell didn't actually invent fracking techniques. Yet, he made efforts to continuously improve the prevalent technology so that it was better and more cost-effective.

This clearly is a revelation: In our big world, there are a lot of invaluable inventions and commercially valuable resources all around us. As long as we keep observing, thinking and then conducting in-depth research, we'll be able to identify the relevant information in a vast sea of data and give it new value. Like Mitchell, you are able to succeed in your new endeavours. In fact, Steve Jobs of Apple, Inc. also succeeded by modifying an original invention, creating another world-renowned brand which has greatly improved our lives.

Forgiveness Brings Changes

Nelson Mandela, president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999, was a civil rights leader. His contribution to mankind was similar in many ways to that of an entrepreneur. He shared the same qualities of persistence and determination and was able to struggle and achieve what no-one believed could be done. Mandela's beliefs led to the unity of races and the abolition of the infamous "apartheid" policy in



South Africa. But there were certainly difficulties here and there along the way.

In June 1964, Mandela was convicted of attempting to overthrow the government by violence, and was sentenced to life imprisonment by a South African court. Subsequently, he spent 27 years in prison, including 18 years on Robben Island. He was subjected to inhuman treatment in prison, and was forced to do hard-labour in a quarry. At night, he was held in a narrow prison cell measuring merely 4.5 m². 21 years after his imprisonment, in 1982, he was allowed to receive visitors face-to-face for the first time. In prison, he did not become demoralized. He still insisted on physical activities, running and doing push-ups, as well as performing other exercises in the tiny prison cell every week. In February 1990, he was released from prison. Deeply moved by Mandela's story, the late rock singer Wong Ka-Kui wrote a song known as "Glory Days" that same year, which became a hit in Hong Kong. In 1993, Mandela received the Nobel Peace Prize.

After having struggled for more than 40 years, he finally achieved victory! In Mandela, we see how the difficulty and suffering a person bears can relate to how much success can be achieved. A reporter once asked Mandela, "Have you ever hated those who made you suffer 27 years in prison?" Mandela replied, "In the beginning, I really hated them! Yet, if I didn't put hatred behind me, and continued to live in hatred, I wouldn't have released myself. It would have meant locking myself in prison."

Another touching example of Mandela's forgiveness was the first Rugby World Cup held in South Africa, in 1995. Most members of the South African national team were white, with only one black player. Mandela requested that the whole nation support the national team regardless of race. He prayed for the team personally, hoping that they would win. On the day of the final, he wore a national team jersey at the stadium to cheer for the team. The South African "Springboks" team beat the usually invincible rugby troupe from New Zealand, and won the championship. The photo of Mandela, wearing his national team jersey and conferring the champion's trophy upon his national team has become a classic, and is a symbol of the successful re-uniting of a once divided country.

Mandela took actions to express his position. His "greatness" was not just about his ideals; it was about having a forgiving heart. His famous speech stated that his idea was not to liberate the blacks, but to liberate his enemies. To release his enemies from a narrow mind and fear, so that no-one would be a prisoner any longer. That's why Mandela was a great man; he was truly open-minded and liberal. The film "Invictus" is a depiction of this story, and is very inspiring.

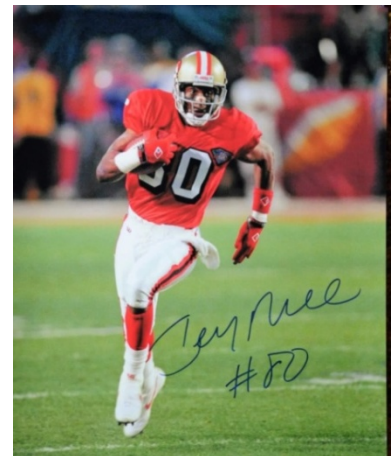
How to Foster Excellence?

We have discussed the characteristics of a leader, but in fact what is the incentive behind the drive and the constant quest for excellence? Indeed, excellence stems from "Deliberate Practice". But as you can understand, "Deliberate Practice" is something incredibly difficult. If a person doesn't have a passion for an objective, I believe no-one can endure the hardship involved. In a previous article, I've mentioned several successful figures such as Mozart, Tiger Woods and Warren Buffett. Their success didn't depend on talent, but on the efforts they made. They are good examples to show that man can conquer nature. As the Chinese saying goes, "No mountain is reliable because a mountain may fall; No man is reliable because a man may age". Only with "Deliberate Practice" can we secure success firmly in our hands forever. You may ask, "So how about this 'Deliberate Practice'? What is it about?" How do we grasp the secret?" First, let me give you a few examples:

- Jerry Rice is a former American football wide receiver in the National Football League (NFL). Arguably the greatest player of all time, he first officially participated in a professional tournament at the age of little more than 20. He only retired at the age of 42, which is a miracle given the very violent and physically-demanding realm of American football. He studied at the Mississippi Valley State University, where he received a football scholarship and achieved a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) record as a wide receiver.

So why was he successful?

- He was known for his rigorous self-discipline. His performance as a wide receiver was better than any other catcher by as much as 50 percent for an extended period of time.
- He played very hard in every game. After every catch, he would immediately go straight to the other end of the opponent's side to reach the sprint zone.
- During the off-season, he arranged training sessions for himself, six days a week, with cardio exercises in the morning and weight exercises in the afternoon.
- He only concentrated on the training movements he needed for the game, and minimized his participation in the offensive and defensive team exercises in order to avoid injury.
- Although the team had a professional coach, most of his training was carried out on



his own.

- His practice routines were very monotonous, but Rice had unlimited enthusiasm for professional US football. We can learn from him that as long as we constantly strive for success, we'll be able to work wonders.
- Will there be differences in the same family, for people who all focus on "Deliberate Practice", in the same living environment, and are trained by the same coach? We can look at the results of an experiment that the Hungarian educational psychologist Laszlo Polgar performed on himself in the 1960s. He believed that the excellence of a person is not congenital, but acquired. A person should focus on his/her strength, and will then make achievements through effort.

He wrote a book entitled "Bring Up Genius", and openly looked for a woman to marry who would help him with his experiment. He finally found a Ukrainian teacher, who could speak Hungarian, called Klara. They had their first daughter, named Susan. At the age of 4, Susan started to receive training to be a chess player. Subsequently, their second daughter Sophia and third daughter Judit were born. The couple stopped working so as to educate their three daughters on a full-time basis. All three of the girls received home-schooling, whose content was mainly about chess playing. In their home, they had a collection of ten thousand chess-related books. They built a huge library of information on chess, documenting all the data from past games and imaginary opponents for future analysis. As a result, the eldest daughter became eligible to participate in the Men's World Chess Championship at the age of 16. Later, the three sisters teamed up to partake in the Women's Olympiad, and won the championship from the Soviet Union, becoming Hungary's national heroes. The three sisters have continued to receive a lot of success in competitions and recognition since that time.

It's worth noting that their father had no training in chess, and his chess skills were just so-so. Their mother also knew almost nothing about chess. This situation perfectly fits the definition of "Deliberate Practice". But why haven't any of the three sisters reached the top and become a World Champion? Also, why does the 3rd sister, Judit, score higher than her elder sisters? Why is she the only one to have made it to the ranks of the world's Top 10 female chess players? Their own assessment was: "Susan is very clever, and reacts very quickly. Yet, undeniably, Judit is the most hard-working one, and Sophia is the laziest among us and refuses to practise. That's why we, three sisters, don't have the same level of achievement." In addition, they felt that other than chess, there were many other things in life that should be important. They said that their the focus on chess had been too heavy. They all got married, and would now rather dedicate their time to their families, and spend

less time on practising chess. Finally, they believe that their father's theory is absolutely correct: talent played a very small role, and 99% of their success relied on personal effort. The Polgars have demonstrated "Deliberate Practice" to the fullest extent. As long as we make a complete effort to implement "Deliberate Practice", excellence will follow.

- Jerry Rice may be a legend, but can we link his efforts with his success? Let's look at another scientific research study conducted in the early 1990s. The aim of this study was to identify the reasons for a violinist to outperform his/her peer group of musicians. The research was carried out at the Berlin Music Academy, a school specializing in the training of world-renowned musicians, some of whom would become soloists, professional orchestra musicians, or school music teachers. Let's use "Excellent", "Very Good" and "Good" to represent the three groups of students. Their ages and backgrounds were similar. Their time spent on practising the violin, completing exercises and having lessons was more or less the same (i.e. approximately 51 hours per week). There wasn't much difference either in terms of their daily life. So, what was the reason that constituted the achievement gap?
 - The time these violinists spent practising solo was quite steady. Among the 12 music-related and 12 non-music-related activities (such as housework, shopping, leisure time and entertainment) listed on the questionnaire, "practising alone" was always ranked first, far higher than any other activities.
 - The total time spent each week on spontaneous practise was very different. The "Excellent" and "Very Good" groups spent 24 hours per week on independent practice while the "Good" group only spent 9 hours.
 - Practice is always hard and requires a lot of time. Both the "Excellent" and "Very Good" groups practised in the morning, or close to noon-time when they were most energised. However, most people in the "Good" group would practise in the late afternoon or evening when they felt tired.
 - The "Excellent" and "Very Good" groups slept more, and had longer nap times. They seemed to want to have plenty of energy every day for their "Deliberate Practice".
 - The primary reason the "Excellent" group was better than the "Very Good" group is because the "Excellent" group of musicians had a larger total number of practice hours from the age of 18 years old. The number of hours spent practising were 7,410 hours, 5,301 hours and 3,420 hours respectively for the "Excellent", "Very Good" and "Good" groups. These are significant differences in the number of total practice hours, and indicate that one should start self-disciplined practising sooner rather than later, as adults tend to have more duties in life, and less time to focus on training hard. It's

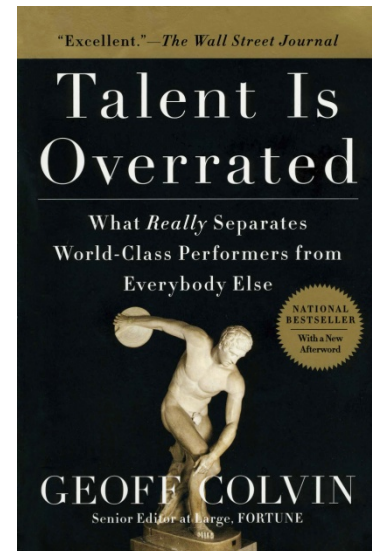
basically impossible to become a top performer without practising hard at a young age.

The Changes Brought About by Deliberate Practice

Everyone understands that "Deliberate Practice" can improve one's performance and lead to achievement excellence. But in what aspects does it change our performance? The most important thing is to help us go beyond our critical points. It makes us know more, understand more and remember more. Prolonged practising can actually transform our body and brain, so that we can upgrade ourselves to a completely different level.

- **Quicker Reactions -**

Fast reactions are not only found in sports games. High achievers can see more information than the average person, because they have nurtured the ability to see things in their environment in a more agile and more effective manner. For example, when it comes to emergency responses and handling when driving a car, an experienced driver has faster reactions when compared with an inexperienced one. A cross-country rider may not have faster actions, but they would understand the relevant parts of the scene more quickly.



- **Ability to Identify the Relevant Aspects -**

Most people do not pay attention to aspects that seem negligible or irrelevant. But people with "Deliberate Practice" habits are more imaginative and delicate, and use different ways to find out the relevancy of the things in their environment, in order to identify the focus and to develop improvement strategies. Wal-Mart in the United States, for example, judges the way the employees treat the customers by looking at the way the supervisors treat the employees. Wal-Mart's founder Sam Walton has understood, from his many years of work experience, that customer satisfaction means employee satisfaction. These management experiences and applications are the results of long-term studies.

- **Far-Sighted Vision -**

Based on long-term research into industry-related topics, a leader should collect and analyse a lot of relevant news stories, and explore different scenarios so as to infer some conclusions. Then, a leader should devise contingency plans for the different conclusions based on these scenarios, and be prepared for different changes or situations accordingly. For instance,

SHELL's Crisis Management Team, for many years, have used the method mentioned above to predict and deal with crises. They developed a variety of crude oil refining methods to successfully avoid the oil embargo crisis in the 1970s. We must understand that grasping the trends within an industry means having a real advantage.

- **Ability to Focus on the Smallest Details -**

In any field, cultivating the ability to notice the small details is the key to success. For example, as a company CEO, personnel selection is the core of my work. The ability to identify competent and reliable personnel is the driving force behind the rapid development of a company's business. Successful leaders must develop a detailed set of requirements for different employment posts.

- **More Delicate Sensibility -**

A painter, for example, can perhaps identify five hues of the colour black. In business management, the idea is similar. In all cases, the ability to identify differences that other people do not see, means that you can also see more advantages than others. While a small part of this critical capacity may be hereditary, the vast majority of it is the result of "Deliberate Practice".

- **Understand More through Experience—**

Those who see the delicate details, who can more easily identify the relevant aspects, and who have a better mathematical reasoning ability, do not necessarily perform better in a profession. That's because they lack industry know-how. This is pretty much like a university graduate who has received a specialized theoretical education (perhaps in Accounting, Statistics, Mathematics, History or Languages) as well as logic training at university, but has never actually applied their knowledge to a particular industry, let alone gained industry-specific expertise.

Oriental Logistics arranges for all employees to actually work in different positions, with the aim of letting our colleagues accumulate expertise through experience. We are convinced that no-one is born with a profound professional knowledge. To achieve success, we must continue to try to surpass ourselves, to accumulate expertise in different positions, and then integrate this knowledge and experience in order to develop a coordinated system. Gradually, we will be able to move towards genuine industry-specific professionalism. In fact, when you are given responsibility for a challenging task, you should believe that however hard and painful the experience may be, as long as you don't fail, you will be a stronger person. This is part of "Deliberate Practice". Since our opening 17 years ago, Oriental Logistics has

made one of the "10 Targets" for every manager to train the second and third echelons of our workforce every year. In this way, we hope that we will be able to nurture our colleagues to cope with our continuous growth.

- **Ability to Remember Information -**

Even after enhancing your instincts and gaining expertise, if you can't remember the relevant information, you won't be able to play the right role at the critical moment. For example, a world-class chess player does not just look at the 25 individual pieces on a chessboard. They rather look at 5-6 available combinations. The memory of a world-class chess player is generally ten to a hundred times that of an average player. In real work, a long-term memory is a kind of "core-related search function", that is the secret to accessing a lot of information. To quickly access professional knowledge and understanding, we need to have a better memory structure, so our information is available more quickly.

Implementation of "Deliberate Practice"

How do we implement "Deliberate Practice" at work? Please look at the following personal experiences:

- First, we must first set our target. At the end of the day, what do we really want to achieve?
- We must constantly ask ourselves, "What would you do?" For example, when reading the newspaper, for every piece of news (industry-related or not), think about its impact on your industry. What effects might it have on the industry? Then, write down your ideas, and retain them.
- Before work, focus on the work process rather than the results. The chance to achieve the desired results will only happen with a correct process.
- At work, one should practise self-observation. Detach yourself from the present, and use a third party's perspective to observe your own performance. As an analogy, when running, an experienced runner will often focus on physical reactions and breathing rate from an outside perspective.
- After work, we must get used to conducting reviews in order to analyse the causes of success or failure, and to find out the real reasons for winning or losing. In this way, we can be best prepared for the next time, and have the courage to stand against challenges rather

than escaping from them. A good leader who normally performs well, will usually blame himself/herself in the case of a failure. Yet, most people put the blame on luck, the difficulty of the task, or the belief that they are simply incompetent, etc., instead of finding out the real causes.

- Sometimes we may encounter some significant ideas or experiences, or learn important lessons. These things will soon disappear from our short-term memory, unless we try to remember these important points for a longer time, and give ourselves a meaningful summary. The most important thing is use this summary to imagine scenarios that may occur in the future, and think about how to deal with such situations. This analysis, conclusion and simulation process will firmly turn these short-term memories into long-term memories. Then one day, when a future scenario suddenly takes place, you will be able to respond appropriately and immediately.

Revelation from Horse-Racing



This year is the Year of the Horse. At the beginning of the year, I came across an article in "National Geographic" magazine. It was a study of horses, explaining why horses will run in a horse-race. Before reading the report, I had believed that horses run out of their will to win, and to be ahead of other horses. This answer is only half-right. In fact, horses run because they are very timid animals and are easily frightened.

Running is their basic escape instinct. The faster a horse runs, and the further it gets in front of other horses, the better its chances are to escape from a dangerous situation. In horse-racing, a jockey hits the horse's back with a whip to frighten the horse further. The more afraid a horse is, the faster it runs.

Similarly, NBA star Kobe Bryant recently said to the reporter interviewing him, "I get up every morning at six o'clock, and start practising basketball until nine o'clock when our team's official practice starts." As he is afraid of losing his ability to score 3 pointers, he forces himself to do a "Deliberate Practice" every morning in order to maintain his ability level. If people have a sense of crisis and fear failure, it's like a horse running (or escaping) through fear of being hunted down. That's also a sense of crisis. This is a very effective driving force and it pushes people to try to avoid failure. Conversely, if someone leads a cosy and indulgent life, it is like Liu Shan

from Chinese history, who did not make the slightest attempt to revive his state "Shu" when it was annexed by the neighbouring state "Wei". This was indeed a very bad example of complacency.

Revelations from Movie Heroes

I believe in "late development". I also believe that "Deliberate Practice" is a successful recipe that will always work. I don't just read newspaper articles – when reading the news, I ask myself, "What should I do?" Similarly, when watching a movie, I am also eager to see what lessons can be learned from the experience or the success story. There are three films with very interesting role models that I would like to share.

- **Gladiator** - The story is about a heroic and beloved General Maximus from the Roman Empire. When he was serving the last wise Emperor, he was "framed" by the ambitious Prince, who killed the Emperor. The Prince wanted Maximus to be sentenced to death. Instead, Maximus escaped and became a slave. Later on, after some turns and twists, he was sent to the arena as a gladiator. Finally, he defeated all of his opponents, and before he died, he killed the crown Prince who had murdered the Emperor. The filming is a bit grey, but it is full of positive energy, and my reflections on this film are:



- Real heroes are not just those who wear attractive armour, hold high positions, and show off their power day-in and day-out. On the contrary, real warriors get nervous every day. They get well-prepared for the battle, and on the battlefield, they fight all the way to the end. They have the attitude that it is right to show "no arrogance in victory, yet no despair in defeat".
- After a defeat, they have the perseverance to redouble their efforts to overcome the difficulties and obstacles on their way to success.
- There is a saying in Northern China: "A pot is made of iron" which means that one should rely on one's own strength. This is like Maximus: he refined his own skills. First, he escaped from death. Then, he defeated his strong opponents one by one in the gladiator's arena. In a dangerous situation, where even his former subordinates would not rescue him, he single-handedly completed his mission. Finally, he took revenge for

the life of the Emperor, and for his wife and children. These all are ideal examples of determination and persistence.

- Even after getting wounded, Maximus still insisted on fighting. Thanks to his perseverance, he overcame fear and physical weakness. It was his will and determination that allowed him to defeat his enemies, demonstrating his unfailing commitment.

● The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty



This is an interesting comedy film that I have seen lately. The story is about Walter Mitty, who works in the Photo Negatives division of the prestigious LIFE magazine in New York City. Due to operational reasons, the monthly magazine has been taken over, and is about to publish its last

issue. The Editor-in-Chief has decided to use an old photo on the last issue's cover. But in the Negatives department, Walter looks for this one photo, to no avail. He tries to find different ways of searching, hoping to complete the last task given to him. In addition, Walter is someone with a very low sense of presence in the real world. He often fantasizes about himself as a superhero, an adventurer and a romantic lover. Because he wants to find self-worth, his journey starts with the pursuit of meaning in his life. Gradually, this becomes a breakthrough, a lifetime adventure, an exploration of values, and a journey of growth and thankfulness. This film is much more positive and optimistic than "Gladiator". What Walter manifests is hope and enthusiasm, which are tools to find the way ahead through challenges and uncertainties. Walter remains full of expectations and hope in life. In the end, LIFE magazine uses a photo taken of him working many years ago on the cover, in recognition of his contribution to LIFE, and this, ultimately, wins him the hearts of his colleagues and his "love interest".

- In the past, Walter was only day-dreamer and couldn't be considered as any sort of hero. Yet, he eventually gets away from his past, completing his work and realizing his dreams with action and determination.
- People, and especially youths, should have dreams, however unrealistic these dreams may be. Yet, even if we "think big", there should always be specific actions we can take in order to realize our dreams. The story tells us that no matter how difficult the journey, there's always a day when our dreams will come true, and that taking some

action is better than simply "thinking big" without taking any actions at all.

- All the efforts Walter makes are without the expectation of any reward in return. From the first day he joined LIFE magazine, he has been very involved in his work, and highly appreciated by famous photographers. He works hard every day without expecting anything back. Ultimately, the magazine uses a photo of him at work for its cover as a token of recognition. The story is praise celebration of this kind of passionate, innocent and honest dedication to work.

● The Grandmaster

Needless to say, this masterpiece directed by Wong Kar-wai in collaboration with the Taiwanese magical realist novelist Chang Ta-chuen, who was in charge of the screenplay, is a film about Chinese martial arts. In fact, it is a complex film that illustrates a story of Chinese heritage; yet adds the storyline of Gong Er's quest to take revenge for her father's death and claim



justice from his father's disciple Masan; and is also the story of Gong Er's love and affection for the grandmaster Ip Man. One of the messages of this film explains that "life is like a game of chess. We should not regret any move. And there shouldn't be any grudges, because fate will decide between us."

The film's dialogue is so incredibly beautiful that it should be published as a poetry anthology for us to enjoy. I have seen the film a dozen times, and transcribed all of the dialogue sentence by sentence. By contrast, perhaps due to cultural differences, "foreigners" don't really appreciate the film's beauty. The New York Times actually commented, "The fighting scenes are stunning, but in today's society we can solve these problems with a gun, so why bother?" This is simply nonsense. A stupid comment.

In fact, Wong Kar-wai's original concept relates to video footage filmed by Ip Man's son three days before the death of the martial arts master. It is said that Ip Man woke up suddenly one night and, still in his pyjamas, demonstrated the complete set of 108 "Wing Chun" moves using a wooden dummy in the living room, so that his son could film them as a record. Maybe he was old or sick, and perhaps he forgot some steps, but he kept on demonstrating the Wing Chun moves. This background is very moving. Master Ip wanted to make use of his last breath to pass on the martial arts expertise that he had acquired. He's the kind of person who upholds the philosophy of "being, knowing, doing". The director

used this film to illustrate the real meaning of a "grandmaster". Here are some quotes from the film, and my interpretations:

- "Each belt represents a different school. One belt, one breath. When you wear a belt, you are a martial arts practitioner. You act with this breath." When you do things, you stay the course, and never give up halfway.
- "The world is big. There is not just the South and the North. Forced survival is essentially to the same as complacency. In your eyes, this piece of cake is equal to a realm of martial arts; but for me, this is a universe. As the Taoist saying goes - 'What is most perfect seems to have something missing' - Only with flaws can we advance." This was Ip Man's response to the Northern master Gong Yutian. He used cake as an analogy to denote the universe, meaning that we should look at the larger picture. There are flaws in a seemingly perfect world, but only with these defects can we progress. This is a very meaningful and inspiring dialogue on life.
- I've mentioned this quote in a previous article: "Master Ip, today, I hand over my reputation to you. My road ahead will be yours. Every step is a stage. I hope that you, like me, will light a lamp with your breath. When there is a will, there is a way." Life is full of challenges, big or small. We should stay focused, and do something very well with our life, and always remember our goals. Focused efforts will eventually be rewarded. This is very touching. It has become my motto and serves as lifelong encouragement.
- "Why are you called Masan? San (of Masan) literally means Three. In the world of martial arts, we have the saying – words come in three; and hands form a circle. This means that there are always geniuses behind the genius, so we should be humble and sometimes give way to others." These are Master Gong's words to remind his disciple Masan to stay humble and be satisfied with who he is.
- "When you should burn incense, then burn incense; When you should eat, then eat; When there is something to be done, do it despite all difficulties." Regardless of any adversity, we should get things done and never back down. This represents how important determination is.

While we are all excited to learn from the leaders mentioned above, we should also think deeply on how to avoid making some "stupid" mistakes. The film "Lone Survivor" is very instructive. It illustrates how a hasty, bad decision can cause tragic results.

The film is adapted from a true story of the US Navy SEALs, and is based on the eponymous memoir Marcus Luttrell, the only surviving member of the incident. The incident occurred at the



end of June 2005, when four SEAL members were led by the young Captain Michael Murphy to the mountains of Afghanistan, in order to carry out pre-surveillance for an action against a Taliban terrorist organization leader, Ahmad Shah. Once they arrived on the mountain, they bumped into one old and two young shepherds from the region. This was unexpected, and they wondered, "Shall we let them go? Or shall we kill them?" The four of them discussed this and voted. One abstained, one suggested that they kill the shepherds, and one opposed. When it was Marcus' turn to vote, he said: "I don't want to be tried before the military and jailed." Consequently, the three Afghan shepherds were released. One of the young men went straight down the mountain to the village and blew the whistle to a Taliban informant. Not long after, the SEAL members were surrounded by more than two hundred Taliban militants holding machine guns. Three of the SEAL members were killed. Afterwards, an MH-47 transport aircraft leaving the base for the rescue operation was shot down on the same mountain, killing the eight SEAL members and another eight members of the special forces on board. Thus, a simple and kind-hearted decision brought about an unprecedented catastrophe, which was the darkest and most serious setback in the Navy SEAL's 40-year history. My thought about this are:

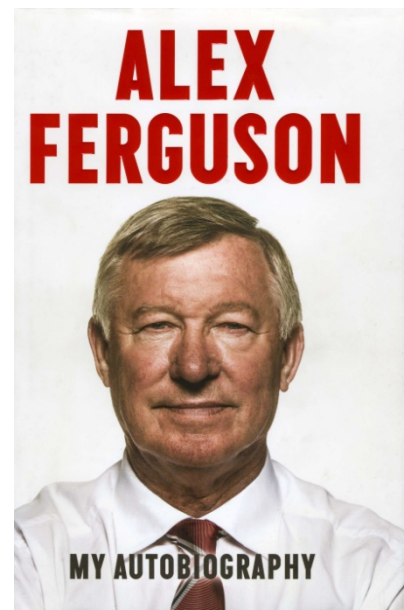
- In fact, when we carefully review the incident, it is not difficult to realise that there were other option, apart from releasing or killing the shepherds. The soldiers could have tied them up with plastic tape to a tree, which would have prevented them from returning to the village and blowing the whistle. Alternatively, they could have tied the shepherds together, and kept them for monitoring purposes, having the best of both worlds.
- These soldiers had received the most rigorous military training, but in this scenario they were not well-prepared, and their team leader Capt. Michael Murphy couldn't make the right decision. This is really ironic for one of the world's top forces, the Navy SEALs. Was it a matter of inadequate training? Or was it because these young soldiers (aged 25-26 years) didn't have the experience to react properly?
- Another irony is that Marcus let the shepherds go for humanitarian reasons. In turn, was it merciful of God that the soldiers were killed? Fortunately, Marcus survived, and finally fled to the Shuryek Valley Village, which had once been saved by the US military. There, Marcus was received by the Pashtun tribe, a relatively traditional and kind group of Afghan people. The result could easily have been completely different, and perhaps he would have been decapitated at once.
- Things are always relative. The SEALs are considered the world's strongest force. Yet, a stupid

mistake caused a big defeat, resulting of the death of 19 elite solders in one single operation. In addition, in the eyes of many people in the world, Afghanistan is full of terrorists because the local men like to believe they are Taliban big shots, with turbans around their heads, clothes draped around their shoulders and a bushy beard. Nonetheless, there is no shortage of people such as Mohammad Gulab Khan, who tried his best to rescue others without fearing for his own safety. I do understand that not everyone called Khan or Mohammad is a bad guy.

The Myth of Manchester United under Ferguson's Leadership

On the occasion of the 20th FIFA World Cup in Brazil, let me talk about football team leadership. Leading a football team is no easy task. Was Manchester United's success due to Ferguson's leadership? And are they currently performing badly because David Moyes is a bad manager? Their success and failure is a beacon of modern business management and can give us a lot of inspiration.

Sir Alex Ferguson coached Manchester United for 26 seasons, winning the English Premier League championship 13 times and the UEFA Champions League championship 2 times before his retirement last year. He recommended that his fellow Scotsman David Moyes take his place, mainly because Ferguson appreciated Moyes' 11 years of stable performance at Everton. Moyes values the nurturing of young players, and has a first-class vision when it comes to enlisting new blood. He also values long-term planning, prefers to hire British players, emphasises hard work, and also attaches great importance to discipline. Almost all of these qualities can be said to be Ferguson's management qualities too. Before making the decision to choose Moyes, Ferguson probably noticed their similarities. After Ferguson hand-picked Moyes, Manchester United signed a six-year contract with Moyes, in an attempt to clone another Ferguson and hoping that after some time of exploration, he would restore the team to its former glory. In fact, Manchester United didn't consider another world-renowned coach, the Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho, because they didn't want a "ready-to-coach" manager. They planned to form a coach from scratch who would have a strong sense of belonging to the club.



Obviously, they underestimated the changes occurring in this era of football, and the pressures that the market exerts on a team's performance. Although Manchester United may have the same talent and the same skill-sets, it is in a different environment and in a different age, and the

results have proven to be very different. Are heroes created out of the times they live in? Or is the character of the time created out of its heroes? Let's see what the reasons actually are.

After taking office in 1986, Ferguson coached for more than three years before Manchester United won their first trophy. Three years later, the club won their first League title. Therefore, Moyes should clearly be given a reasonable "grace period" for him to get properly acquainted with the team. If Moyes has been born two or three decades earlier, he could have become another Ferguson. However, today, Moyes hasn't established a reputation or a solid foundation, meaning that he has little time to adapt to his well-paid coaching position before he is required to show results. The more mistakes he makes, the less prestige he has within the club and the more chaotic the team becomes. This happens again and again.

In October 2013, Ferguson launched his autobiography and talked about his ideas on leadership. In this book, he talks about seeing some cause-and-effect relations that other people could not see. That's why he led Manchester United for 26 years so smoothly, and is another good example of "Deliberate Practice".

- First, Ferguson attached great importance to the team's unity, and regarded this as more important than any individual players. His insistence on this value for core governance is far more important than having a star player that may appeal to the fans. He used the most highly cooperative players as the backbone to support the overall situation, and used a few star players to strengthen the performance. Then even when some star players would not cooperate, the team could still hold together.
- Second, he took great efforts to establish a leading reputation under the support of the club's management. He established governance rules to ensure that the planned training sessions and tactics could be successfully implemented so that the team's performance wouldn't be poor. David Beckham's great achievements, for example, actually made the boss feel uneasy, and therefore Beckham had to leave the team. In 2005, Irish star player Roy Keane was fired because he often verbally criticized his team mates in public. These were some examples of Ferguson's efforts to eliminate individualism and idolisation, so that there would be team unity.
- Third, the local "Red Devils" were the pillars of the team's success. That's mainly because they were extremely loyal to the team and the coach, which is a quality often not found in foreign players. As the American real estate tycoon Donald Trump has repeatedly emphasized in his TV show "The Apprentice", rather than staff competence, he is more

concerned with employee loyalty.

Moyes failed for a reason. Since the 1990s, football matches have become increasingly televised, which has made football a popular sport and entertainment at the global level, and has given birth to more stellar players. As a result, the average salary of a footballer has skyrocketed from 1,000 GBP per week in the 1980s, to 30,000 GBP per week (an increase of 30 times). Star players are now earning more than the coach, and their prizes are also higher. So how much authority does a coach have? When he took office in 1986, Ferguson could use an authoritarian approach to leadership. Today, on the contrary, Moyes' power is much weaker when compared to that of the players. Basically, he can't really "manage" these star players. Furthermore, with the expansion of the players' power, football clubs have also become more profit-oriented, and this is a core issue. The club's revenues and expenses are in the hundreds of millions in British pounds. If the performance is poor, the losses for the club can be quite severe. This problem is even more serious for Manchester United. The American Glazer Family took out a loan to invest in Manchester United. As of today, they are now £360 million in debt. The club simply does not have the patience to endure a continuous decline in the team's performance, which will drastically reduce its income. That's the reason why they changed their coach.

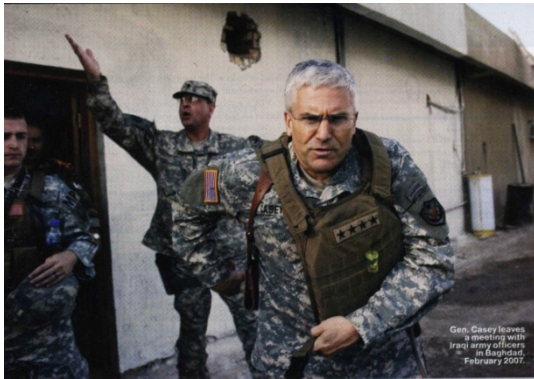
In fact, Ferguson's 26 years of legendary service is attributable to several factors. It was not just his own doing. It comes down to "Power Theory", of which there are many definitions. According to the definition by French & Raven (1959), there are 5 sources of power, namely "Rewards", "Reverence", "Legitimacy", "Expertise", and "Coerciveness". The main point is, power must be authorized (i.e. power itself does not fall from the sky for no reason). When Manchester United was under Ferguson's authoritative leadership, the club did have an absolute say in that era. Ferguson was endorsed by the club to coach, under no premise of the idolisation of players, and his personal prestige was allowed to gradually be established. Also, several players were acquired and trained by Ferguson from a young age, and supported Ferguson, making it easy for him to lead the team to make outstanding achievements.

Although in recent years, the problems mentioned above were gradually beginning to show, Ferguson could always contain the problems. But the advantages that Ferguson used to enjoy have now ceased to exist for Moyes. The club should support Moyes, (and it is likely to do so, otherwise it wouldn't have signed a six-year contract). But things have now changed. The actual "power" of the club has now fallen into the hands of the star players, and even the local Manchester United reserve team players do not support Moyes. Without any endorsements, Moyes is indeed a "Lone Survivor". I am sure that Moyes is talented. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been possible for him to have had 11 years at Everton Football Club with a brilliant record.

Instead, it's the situation that he is in that has made him a scapegoat for the team's governance failures at the time when he joined Manchester United as a coach.

Challenges Induced by Leadership's "VUCA"

Recently, there's a very popular buzz word, and that is the English acronym "VUCA". It stands for "Volatility", "Uncertainty", "Complexity" and "Ambiguity". We should be clear that "Deliberate Practice" is an attitude, and a way for a person to achieve excellence through deliberate self-cultivation. "VUCA", on the other hand, is a kind of approach to dealing with things in a constantly-changing, uncertain environment.



In an April 2014 interview with the US magazine "Fortune", the recently retired US Army Chief of Staff *George W. Casey Jr. discussed how he led in the "VUCA" world during his long-term military career. George Casey Jr. was born in Sendai, Japan, and graduated from Georgetown University in the United States. When first asked about "VUCA", George answered directly, "What?" But soon, after an Internet search, he realised that "VUCA" was a military term that he had come across many years ago in military combat school. George had a great emotional attachment to the acronym. In 1996 in Bosnia, in 2000 in Kosovo, and later during his service in Iraq, in response to the uncertainties regarding the way ahead, and with everything indeterminable or completely out of control, he trained himself to accomplish his tasks step-by-step, even under an extremely complex war environment. He understood very well that in order to effectively command the US troops and complete his mission, he had to give clear instructions to his subordinates and explain the direction of action thoroughly. That's why every time, before a new mission, he would first ask himself, "What kind of task are we here to accomplish?" As a commander for the coalition army, he had great responsibility. Any wrong decision would certainly result in heavy casualties and dire consequences. A leader, like everyone else, has actually got limited capacities, but in the face of a "VUCA" environment, the leader must unleash his/her full potential as soon as possible, so as to generate the greatest effects.

Oriental Logistics was founded 17 years ago. The "VUCA" that we are now faced with is really not so different from that found in a war situation, and can be likened to the sense of helplessness experienced by George. You may want to know how I deal with this challenge? First, by dealing with "Complexity" (C): Dealing with all tasks of different natures by a process of classification

(i.e. should a particular issue be assigned to the Project Management Department vs. Operations Department; Branch Office in Mainland China vs. Head Office in Hong Kong; setting up different regional entities to cope with different local laws and regulations, and so on). Ambiguity (A): We all know that Oriental Logistics embraces scientific management as a core value. When it comes to an unclear issue, we employ quantitative analysis to constantly try to figure out the correlations involved, so as to act or react accordingly. Meanwhile, we continue to collect market information to better understand the actual trends. Uncertainty (U): When you are somewhat certain but not quite sure about something, implement a "situation prediction analysis" and deploy different contingency plans. And as for Volatility (V), it is relatively simple. We analyse the information provided by our database to identify the frequency and occurrence of patterns, and make many contingency plans. For the occasional sporadic situation, we can only "improvise" accordingly.

In reality, no business operation can be perfect. Mistakes are inevitable. In the logistics business, "Six Sigma" is only able to maintain a standard of about 4.3 sigma. To meet this standard every day is already something exceptional. Our business is based on human operations rather than a mechanical production, and relies solely on our Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to maintain the stability of our quality of service. That's why we need to clearly understand the causes of any errors. In fact, every mistake is a lesson to learn. As long as we are willing to be open, listen more, and to fully understand the causes of our failure, we'll be able to enjoy continued success. It is only when we constantly learn from our past failures that we can eventually succeed. Therefore, we can conclude that the best recipe for coping with a failure is first and foremost be sincere and courageous, to locate the problems, to admit our mistakes, to reflect, to look for room for improvement and to make changes. In other words, if we deal with the failure in a graceful manner, it is absolutely possible to turn our past and current mistakes into tomorrow's blessing.

My Views on Leadership

One day, someone will ask you for the definition of success? First, I don't think that there is such a thing as a "big success" or a "small success". As long as we have worked hard and tried our best, we don't have to regret or to answer to anyone. To explain in detail, I think that we can look at "achievement" on four levels. First, we should ask a realistic question: How much wealth can you create? Money is a kind of performance rating in the business world, and is an indicator of career excellence. The second question is: what's your reputation in the industry and your contribution to society? Third: how much influence do you have now? What changes can you bring about? And finally: what kind of profound, inspiring impact can you bring to other people

in the future? Apart from the first item, the other three questions are relatively objective. I shall wait for your evaluation of me.

How much money do I have - Does it really matter after all? Being "successful" means you are trying your best to accomplish something. Remember "light a lamp with your breath"? To me, this is more important than how much money I earn. Doing business simply to earn money won't keep you going for long. Besides, you'll only be happy if your business can contribute to society, and take care of the needs of different people. Entrepreneurs are respected because they create social values, rather than simply creating their own wealth. People admire entrepreneurs, not because of how much wealth they have, but because they keep on fighting (like Mitchell's never-give-up perseverance). In this respect, I feel very confident. I have tried my best and I don't have regrets at all. It seems as if I have accomplished twice the number of things that I should achieve in a single lifetime.

Primarily, I have established this professional platform, Oriental Logistics, which also lets our colleagues demonstrate their skills, and try to realise their dreams. Can you keep up? Go on – do your best? Set goals for yourself? These all are up to our colleagues to decide.

In my 17 years of running this business, I've really encountered a lot of different opportunities. Those that have gone by are gone. I can't have them back. I can't say today, "Had I known it, I would have...blah-blah-blah..." Yesterday's the past, and tomorrow's the future, but today is the gift. That's why it's called "the present". If you continue to make an effort now, to believe that things will be better tomorrow, and pay careful attention to the processes in everything that you do, then I'm sure you will achieve good results. "When there is a will, there is a way." Life cannot always be full of idyllic and relaxing moments, and you cannot always be in top form, either. There must be ups and downs. When you succeed, you should remain humble and grateful. The most important thing is that, in the face of adversity, you remain serious. That's a high level of "Deliberate Practice".

Reading books and newspapers is part of my daily routine. When looking at the news, you should find something relevant to yourself, something that allows for self-reflection. Collect and classify all available information, so that it becomes part of your knowledge. In reality no-one can ask questions about everything, or find constant guidance. We should continue to study, progress, and work at self-transformation and self-improvement. As long as you learn continuously and practise repeatedly, you'll be able to generate inspiring thoughts and make behavioural changes. If you know me, then in my articles you must have seen my shadow. I am very much a "Deliberate Practice" person. In the section on "Practice", I shared my years of

experience. But don't forget that what you read is second-hand knowledge. You need to actually perform a task, walk the path, make mistakes and live seriously to lead a first-hand life. No rehearsals. There will never be a moment in life when everything is prepared; life cannot wait. If you have a dream, go ahead and take a chance. This is the reason I like how Walter Mitty lives out his true life through actions (in the film "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"). Don't care about success. Even if you are unsuccessful, you can at least be confident, stand up and tell other people, "I have tried! I feel great!"

Indeed, age doesn't have much of an impact on job performance. It's only when some people give up that there's little achievement, or when they do not give themselves enough pressure to succeed. That's why many people end up not achieving anything in life. It's true that pressure is the driving force. The famous Polish-born pianist Arthur Rubinstein insisted on giving public performances even when he was very old. He couldn't play as fast as before, so he played the allegro parts more slowly, while playing the normal-speed parts even more slowly, so that the audience wouldn't notice. As you can see, there are many solutions to a problem. It all depends on whether you want to truly resolve a problem or not.

Finally, I've spent more than two weeks of my time writing this long article. It's been as hard as completing half of the "Tour de France" race. There's only one purpose behind it, and that is to use examples of well-known people, results of scientific experiments, reflection on films and my personal experience with "Deliberate Practice" to offer you some of the driving forces behind a successful leader. How will you develop the ability to excel? I hope that you will make "Deliberate Practice" a habit, and that it will become an indispensable part of your life. Only then will it be with you forever and help you succeed. Here, I would like to wish all my colleagues who work hard every day towards their ideal life, and who constantly implement "Deliberate Practice" every success. I hope your enthusiasm for your work will continue to drive you forward.

Today, on the occasion of celebrating the 17th anniversary of the establishment of Oriental Logistics, let me conclude with the last stanza of the poem that maintained Mandela's morale, as he endured his 27 years in prison:

It Matters Not How Strait The Gate,
How Charged With Punishments The Scroll,
I Am The Master Of My Fate;
I Am The Captain Of My Soul
(William Henley---INVICTUS)

**** End ****

(*His father George W. Casey Sr., a West Point graduate, was a US Army Admiral and was killed in 1970 in an aircraft accident when visiting his colleagues during the Vietnam War.)