



Collective Effort

Principles and collective awareness determine a winner. What exactly are these ingredients?

MY HUSBAND TOOK PART IN

the recent 4x4 Rainforest Challenge (RFC) which was held in Johor in December. His team included 'Team Russia' and 'Team Johor'.

At the onset, it was obvious there were differences. The Russian car was smaller and not optimally powered. A common language was another challenge. Nevertheless, the team made a plan, executed it and went on to win first prize! Not all challenges went well. However, they persevered and won.

I watched other teams that were participating in the event. All had the same goal and motivation – to win. However, it was the principles and collective awareness used in planning and execution that determined the overall winner.

What are these ingredients?

Interdependence

My husband's team analysed the individual differences (strengths, weaknesses of vehicles and drivers) and mapped out a plan for the team, without judgment or cynicism, that collectively had a better chance at winning. This included foregoing one out of the ten obstacles as it would have damaged a couple of the vehicles. With 10 days yet to go in the jungle, damaging a vehicle on the first day was pointless.

This was definitely a case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. The principles and ethos used that



helped my husband's team win were:

- Awareness of the big picture: one team event versus the remaining days of the challenge,
- Interdependence: the relevance and interconnectivity of each vehicle, driver, co-driver to the collective team, and
- Team diversity: young versus older and new versus experienced drivers. The differing nationalities, language and cultures were at the collective level, irrelevant. The team had transcended initial barriers.

Can these simple RFC principles and collective awareness be used in the Malaysian context?

THE BUILDING BLOCKS ARE THERE – 1MALAYSIA, THE GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMATION PLAN (GTP), ETP. TO COMPLEMENT THESE, A STRUCTURED PLATFORM FOR ACCELERATED ‘LEARNING-LED CHANGE’ DRIVEN BY THE TALENT WITHIN IS NEEDED.



One step closer

It is the first month of another new year. A significant year for Malaysia as she charts the next decade towards achieving developed nation status.

The Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) is the roadmap to achieve this. With any programme or roadmap such as this, the people or citizens of Malaysia play a significant part. I quote the words of a young Malaysian in the papers recently, ‘Above all, the citizens need to realise that hoping for better prosperity alone isn’t going to help the country. Progress can only be made when the citizens of

a country feel committed to making it a better place.’

The Prime Minister stated recently that the power is in the hands of the people: to leverage on our diversity and differences in powering a successful nation.

Driving change within an organisation has its challenges, let alone driving change within a nation. Organisations that have been successful at driving change are the ones where people within it have ‘bought-in’ to the need for change and driven it themselves.

How do we pull together as ‘Team Malaysia’ using the RFC principles and collective awareness described above? The building blocks are there – 1Malaysia, the Government Transformation Plan (GTP), ETP. To complement these, a structured platform for accelerated ‘learning-led change’ driven by the talent within is needed.

Talent within

Talent Corporation was established to address the talent requirements for the ETP using a two-pronged approach: to bring talent from abroad and to retain talent within. The success of the approach will depend on the development of talent as a whole, but more importantly, a structured platform for accelerated development of the talent within Malaysia currently will play a critical part.

At the heart of the platform, there should be an action learning element whereby ‘we take action as we learn at

the same time’. The platform enables us to have the following:

- Awareness of the Big Picture
- Awareness and understanding of the big picture helps us plot a roadmap in determining our role in relation to the external environment of our team, organisation, industry, country, region or life. It requires us to step back and scan the current realities, analyse them and guide us to act from a new awareness.
- Interdependence
- ‘Team Malaysia’, a collection of people is interconnected. When we understand how we impact each other through our interactions with individuals, teams, within an organisation, industry, country and region using our new awareness, we begin to grow as a nation.
- Diversity and difference
- The key to my husband’s team’s success was their ability to learn to interact and cooperate by engaging their differences. This led to trust and confidence of the team, enhancing their social capital. Today’s global business environment calls for the ability to harness the best capabilities from everywhere. Though important at the initial stages, diversity and difference eventually become silent stakeholders of ‘Team Malaysia’ as our new collective awareness and interdependencies take charge.

Non-judgement – the glue

I believe ‘Team Malaysia’ is capable of achieving its goal using this structured platform glued together by our potential ability to drop judgement, cynicism and fear.

Why don’t we build it together to enhance social and economic growth?

More on this structured platform in the next articles. [mb](#)

THE WRITER IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF O&C ADVISORY. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT YOGA@OPTIONSANDCHOICES.ASIA