

GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

Issue 4 | Volume 1

April 2021

MONETIZING THE LEGGINGS EFFECT

Reaching \$175
Million With A
Unique Take On
Leggings



ALSO INSIDE

The Curious Case Of
The 4-Day Work Week

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Four Lessons
Blackjack Can Teach
You About Business

Pg 24



From the Editor

Dear Readers,

This issue is a collection of some very inspiring individuals couples with thought-provoking articles. What I like most about this issue is the diversity; we have selected leaders from all around the globe who have climbed the ladder of success with hardships paving the way.

This issue especially highlights how you can turn your passion for anything into monetary profits. Julia Straus, our cover story, Julia Straus has remarkably turned Sweaty Betty into a \$175 Million Athleisure Brand by selling leggings and fitness gear. Her approach with the brand is candid and genuinely connects with the customer, empowering them to be fit and lead the best life they can rather than focusing on losing weight.

Our thought leadership articles have also featured several insightful articles from an array of topics, including dealing with equal pay and the topical four-day workweek that could be implemented worldwide in the future.

I want to commend the entire team for putting together this issue. And to you, my dear readers, I truly hope you feel uplifted and inspired after reading this edition.

Warm Regards,
Sherlyn Gomes
 Editor at Global Leaders Today

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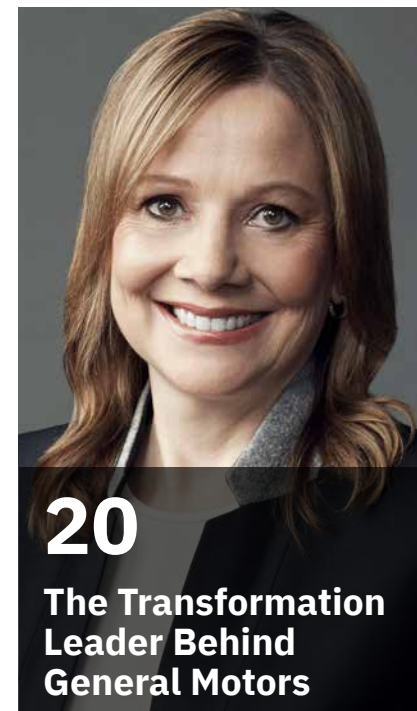
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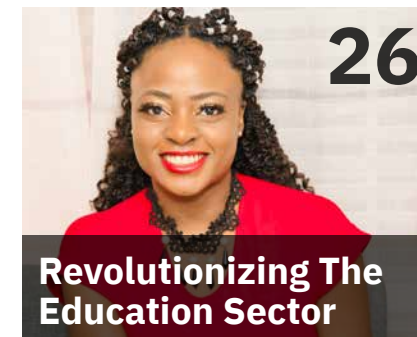
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Monetizing The Legging Effect

Julia Straus was the Chief Executive Officer at Tula and was credited with bringing the brand into the spotlight. She previously was the Vice President, Business Development and Partnerships at BaubleBar. Straus currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director at Sweaty Betty and has taken the brand to new heights, especially during the pandemic era.

Straus has a long-standing reputation for building successful brands with impressive accomplishments. Being raised by entrepreneur parents, she always had the knack to do things differently.

Straus always had the entrepreneurial spirit running through her veins and had her first working gig when she was merely a child; she sold her art at art sales. "Entrepreneurship is very stressful and my parents hoped I would do something more predictable. They loved working for themselves but felt like security came with a corporate job."

Julia heeded their advice and enrolled at Princeton University as a History Major and an Art Minor. While at Princeton,

Straus drank up liberal arts with almost 12 varied courses and truly explored different subject areas. For her post-graduation, she worked in finance at Lehman Brothers and Goldman Sachs before pursuing her MBA at Harvard Business School.

Deep within, Straus always wanted to work at a startup and help brands grow while catering to the people's needs. After working through various jobs, she eventually ended up at PopSugar and later, BaubleBar as Director of Partnerships. BaubleBar, at the time, was a small company of 20 employees, Tula on the other hand, was being virtually operated by three founders. "I had hit a plateau at BaubleBar and through a mutual friend was introduced to Dan Reich, who was helping me bring BaubleBar on QVC. He told me about Tula over a phone call and at the end of the call, I asked if I could meet him."

Tula has three Founders: Dan Reich, Ken Landis and Dr Raj, a Practising Doctor. However, they needed someone to run their operations and head the company. Straus recalled, "I am so thankful to them for trusting someone who had no experience in beauty. They believed in my well-rounded background and saw my motivation in going to the very beginning of a startup."

With Straus heading the company, Tula did exceptionally well via QVC and its eCommerce platform. It became a favourite for women in their 20s-30s, who saw Tula as their first step towards a more serious skincare regime.

Julia faced many challenges at Tula, including differentiating the brand in a highly saturated market for cosmetics. Having a reputation of being on QVC while also actively engaging with bloggers/influencers and strategic partnerships with PopSugar, Physique57,

and Health Magazine helped boost the brand image and get recognition.

In 2018, she was offered the role of Managing Director and CEO with British Activewear Brand, Sweaty Betty, and she has made great strides with the brand ever since.

Straus revealed what attracted her to the brand in an interview; she said, "We really wanted to make this a product that allowed women to express themselves, to play with colour, to play with print, and to make sure that the brand wasn't preaching and wasn't saying, 'You need to look like this. You need to go do this to be fit.' Actually, it is [saying], 'Why don't you go have fun and hang out and be active and be social with your friends, and here's a product that's going to allow you to do that.' So it's always been a brand that approached it a little bit differently and believed that you can actually be very serious about your fitness without taking yourself too seriously."

In the 2020 recession, she dubbed the term 'leggings effect' wherein women prioritized their fitness and health in the pandemic and turned towards purchasing leggings and fitness gear, which in turn positioned athleisure for success in 2020.

Straus thinks that Sweaty Betty is different from other brands as she says, "Brands need to be able to express what they're here for, and how they relate to customers beyond the product. And I think for us, our purpose is to empower women through fitness and beyond, we are focused on the female customer and empowering her to live her best life."

But for Sweaty Betty, it all comes down to their customers; they are keen on trying to get their consumer's views and improving their products. Straus said,

The pandemic of 2020 taught Straus the importance of building a digital community and not losing sight of their message to empower women, especially during these trying times

Although it's data-driven, every product to market starts with listening to customers and having ears to the ground, including its latest launch, a performance hijab."

The idea to start a range of performance hijabs came from members of their team as it would empower all women to play the sport that they like or exercise in clothes that they are genuinely comfortable wearing. "Nike and Under Armour offer one and they're often sold out. We're thinking of the entire head-to-toe wardrobe for the entire customer base of active women," said Straus.

Total revenue for Sweaty Betty was at \$110 million in 2019. Even though the stores were closed for most of the year, sales grew 60% in 2020, totalling nearly \$175 million. Its International business represents approximately 40% of total sales with triple-digit growth in North America in 2020.

"We met our active customer when we opened our first boutique in Notting Hill in 1998 and sweated with her ever since and that's a very special relationship," recalled Straus fondly.

By 2019, Sweaty Betty had established 49 brick-and-mortar stores across the United Kingdom, with a presence in several areas and now has a total of 55 standalone stores. Straus was tasked with helping Sweaty Betty grow its omni channel presence.

But the pandemic of 2020 taught Straus the importance of building a digital community and not losing sight of their message to empower women, especially during these trying times. "We changed our social media strategy overnight to include more home workouts, self-care and mindfulness content as a way to support our community." With the easing restrictions now, the online community continues to remain vibrant.

Straus hopes to continue the momentum in 2021, as Sweaty Betty's partnership with Nordstrom expands into 99 doors in Q2 in North America. She hopes to transform the world of activewear with comfort and health reigning over the coming years.



Image Credit: WWD

Changing The Face Of Technology In Nigeria



Image Credit: The World Economic Forum

‘Gbenga Sesan is the Executive Director of Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN), a social enterprise that connects underserved people-groups with ICT-enabled opportunities. Initially trained as an Electronic & Electrical Engineer at Obafemi Awolowo University, he then followed his passion for teaching. His consulting experience includes assignments completed for numerous institutions, including Microsoft, Harvard University, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Freedom House, amongst other reputable organisations.

G benga Sesan was born in a remote village, Akure, in Nigeria. He attended college at the Federal Government College, Idoani, Akure. The college had just received two sets of computers, and Sesan, who was in his third year at that time, was too excited to try the new age technology devices. However, a teacher rebuked him and said, “Sorry, you can’t understand how to use them because they are not for people like you.”

Right at that moment, Sesan decided that he would learn to use computers and teach others this invaluable skill who were as unfortunate as him. He considered the discrimination unfair and unjust because two other students whose fathers worked as professors in one of the federal universities were allowed to use the school’s newly acquired computer sets. After all, they already had prior knowledge to use the device. Simultaneously, the teachers remained adamant not to allow or help anyone to use the newly acquired computers.

With this burning desire to prove his teachers wrong, he immediately enrolled in a Computer Training School after Secondary School in 1994 before completing his Electronic and Electrical Engineering at the Obafemi Awolowo University.

In an attempt to hone his computer skills, during his third year, he was to undergo an industrial attachment; he chose to work with Neural Technology Limited, a Lagos-based company that enabled him to acquire and perfect his skills in website designing, amongst others.

“When I returned to campus, I was really excited about teaching others, and I started teaching website designing to students for two thousand naira. For the first 12 students I taught, I was able to pay for my accommodation and a few other needs. After that, I got involved in departmental politics, and became the Chairman of our Electronic Club because of my agenda which they knew was to teach computer skills”, Sesan said.

Sesan found himself as the computer veteran of the college, even before he graduated. Just after his graduation in 2001, he participated in a competition. The idea behind the competition was to discover young Nigerians who were adept at technology and would be on par with experts worldwide. He emerged victoriously and became the first Youth Ambassador at the Information Technology Nigeria. As fate would have it, one of the tasks assigned to him was to travel across Nigeria to teach the locals how to use computers.

“In fact, when I was invited to the Federal Government College, Idoani, after my presentation, the same teacher who had told me I didn’t know how to use computers was actually the one who gave the vote of thanks,” Sesan reminisced.

Sesan saw this as just the beginning and knew he could pave the way for opportunities for more people like him, and has, since then, continued to strive towards excellence. Over the years, he continued his education and has studied at the Lagos Business School, New York Group for Technology Transfer, Oxford, Harvard, Stanford and Santa Clara Universities. He also holds a diploma in software application, certificate in

Sesan started this initiative as he thought we cannot keep waiting on the Government to create jobs as the Government already has a lot on its plate.

venture management, and project management certification from the Lagos Business School.

Paradigm Initiative Nigeria

At the time, he was spearheading a project called Lagos Digital Village at his previous job. The project deeply corresponded with his dream and he decided that he needed to act on his plan right away to help the youth. He soon resigned to focus on his dream, the Paradigm Initiative Nigeria, PIN that he started online.

Sesan started this initiative as he thought we cannot keep waiting on the Government to create jobs as the Government already has a lot on its plate. However, he reasoned that in an ideal society, Governments don’t create jobs, the private sector especially the small and medium enterprises do. Governments can only help with improving the environment to boost business growth in the end.

“PIN works in the space between youth, technology and improved livelihood. For example, we currently have a project in Ajegunle, Lagos, in which we train people in technology and entrepreneurship, connect them with internship opportunities, and, as much as possible, get them to begin work with their skills”, Sesan explains.

In the end, Sesan concludes that we are in control and are the only ones that can make or break our futures, “Decide your tomorrow today, and equip yourself towards living that dream. We must realise that we represent a generation that can say NO and YES: we must say ‘no’ to the ills around us, and ‘yes’ to hard work that gives you the opportunity to solve problems — and be rewarded for it. The whole world will stand aside for you if you know where you are going.”

Igniting The Conversation In Sustainability In Kurdistan

Basima Abdulrahman is a renowned climate trailblazer and passionately works on green building projects in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. She is a World Economic Forum Foundation Board Member, Cultural Leader, and a sought-after speaker at Davos, UNESCO and various international events. Basima was featured by TIME magazine as a Young Leader in 2019 and as a Visionary Leader by 100 Real Leaders in 2018.

Basima is a proud Baghdad-born Kurd. She resided in Baghdad until 2006 and was later forced to move to Kurdistan due to the Civil War. She moved to the US to do her Masters and holds a degree in Structural Engineering from Auburn University.

She revealed in an interview, "When I was doing my Masters, I was working a lot in doing buildings, structural design and I didn't like it. When I came back to Iraq around January 2015, it was the peak time that ISIS came in, and all the military operations were happening and all the disruption happening across the country. It was a bit different."

When she moved back to Iraq, the job opportunities at the time seemed bleak due to the ISIS invasion. That led Basima to explore her options and eventually led her to joining the United Nations. Here she was introduced to a new concept that instantly captivated her; she said, "I was introduced to the concept of

green building, and at some point, I was interested to learn more about it. So I went on my own twice to the States to study it more. I got accredited in this area."

Basima attended a program to study rating systems for green buildings to better understand the nitty-gritty of green buildings. The US Green Building Council soon accredited her to certify, design, and retrofit facilities to meet their rating system's criteria after the program.

Basima said the main reason she chose to come back to Iraq after doing her Masters and did not settle in the US, despite the comfort and personal benefits it offered, is that she wanted to help build the country back up. She had a moment of epiphany while in the US, she recalled, "I remember that night I was following up with my family, and they were worried ISIS was very close, 10 kilometres away from Erbil

city. I got really worried, and I felt sad and ashamed because I did not want to be associated with all this mess. Then I had this—I don't know what to call it—moment of clarity, I guess. When you hit rock bottom and then the only way is to go up again. And that's when I felt, You know what, maybe I can help somehow. I didn't know what I was going to do, then I thought, I should go back. I should do something good. I was thinking more towards things related to how we can promote this region—as this very old historical region that is rich with

Image Credit: The World Economic Forum

Basima is currently at the forefront of creating awareness and driving dialogue on sustainable development in the region. However, she firmly believes large-scale workshops and seminars that bring people from different professions are needed to drive a concrete plan that will yield results.

all the knowledge, all the history, all the good things."

She moved back to Erbil in 2017 and founded KESK. It is the only consulting and design company dedicated to green building in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). KESK provides certification systems, compliance verification, designing, constructing, and operating a green building.

The company has recently concluded a recycling project in Erbil and is also currently partnering with the UN-Habitat to turn a damaged building into a green building in Mosul. Implementing solar energy projects and training courses to the masses has been under its main activities in the past two years. KESK is also in talks with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to collaborate on green building projects in the KRI.

Green construction is a new concept in the Kurdish market. However, she foresees, slowly but surely, the adoption of green building practices will gain traction in the KRI. "Everything here is supportive for the implementation, and the process of such types of initiatives," she said, adding that many initiatives come from the KRG to protect the environment.

Basima is currently at the forefront of creating awareness and driving dialogue on sustainable development in the region. However, she firmly believes large-scale workshops and seminars that bring people from different professions are needed to drive a concrete plan that will yield results.

Being a female entrepreneur, she revealed, "It's giving me more power v.

You'd be surprised. But people wouldn't listen. They wouldn't because maybe from the first side, they would think, Oh, that's a female, going to tell us how we should do things. But then, when you're talking from knowledge, from expertise, this mask just disappears—and they just see someone who knows what they are talking about and listen."

She would like to set an example for other women currently paving their path to success; she says, "Surprisingly, I haven't ever felt that I am judged or not heard because of being female. I think maybe that is giving me more power and setting a good example for other females to just step forward when they believe in and want to do something, they believe in something and they just step up."

She thinks it is her responsibility to work on sustainable projects and get the dialogue going in the KRI. She envisions sustainable policies and a long-term sustainable plan for Kurdistan to have a resilient future against the ever-growing threat of Climate Change. Her ultimate goal is to build a green city in the KRI in the next ten years. "When I travel anywhere in the world, I feel like we can do this. We have the potential. There is so much to do here, we have this canvas, we can build something beautiful here."

She truly believes that this new era will usher in peace and sustainability that has the potential to not only change KRI but the world as a whole. She said, "Peace is coming, peace is going to be the norm one day. I feel we are on the brink of this new era. And hopefully, the next years are just going to be about rebuilding and developing and advancing in all different sectors."

NEWS

Miley Cyrus Is Giving Away Stocks Worth \$1 Million



Cyrus announced the giveaway as she celebrates the 15th anniversary of the premiere of 'Hannah Montana,' her television series. Cyrus also took to Twitter and shared a link that urged her fans to learn more about stocks.

Cyrus asked fans interested in the giveaway to share their Cash App username and favourite company name in the comments of her social media posts on Twitter or Instagram. Responders counted Apple Inc. (NASDAQ: AAPL), Tesla Inc. (NASDAQ: TSLA), and AMC Entertainment Holdings Inc. (NYSE: AMC) among the stocks they would be interested in receiving. Winners will be selected at random.

"Nothing is more important than investing in yourself. I want to spread ownership to as many people as I can, so I'm teaming up with @CashApp to give out \$1 MILLION in stocks," the pop singer wrote in a post on her official Twitter account.

The Louvre Put Its Entire 480,000 Piece Art Collection Online For Free

The online platform is an online exhibit of sorts with sculptures, engravings, objects, sketches and paintings from the entire museum gallery. They have also gone ahead and documented images of statues from the nearby Tuileries and Carrousel gardens.

The museum has digitized a massive number of artworks, with almost 480,000 pieces that are now accessible for free on the newly-launched online platform.

All the eight departments of the museum are showcased in full, allowing art lovers to view a variety of pieces, from Egyptian art to Renaissance sculptures.

The Louvre's most famous works, including the 'Mona Lisa,' 'Venus de Milo,' and 'Liberty Leading the People,' are all on display in the online collection.



In A First, New Zealand Approves Paid Leave For Miscarriage

New Zealand's Parliament has passed legislation granting mothers and their partners the right to go on a paid leave after a miscarriage or stillbirth, becoming only the second country in the world to do so. The leave provisions apply to mothers, their partners as well as parents planning to have a child through adoption or surrogacy, she said.

The bereavement allowance, passed unanimously in parliament late Wednesday, gives employees three days' leave when a pregnancy ends with a stillbirth without having to tap into sick leave.

"The passing of this bill shows that once again New Zealand is leading the way for progressive and compassionate legislation, becoming only the second



country in the world to provide leave for miscarriage and stillbirth," said Labour Party MP Ginny Andersen, who initiated the bill.

Nepalese Climbers Cleaned 2.2 Tons Of Trash From Everest In 47 Days



A group of climbers from Nepal have received immense praise after spending 47 days cleaning and collecting over 2.2 tons of garbage scattered around Mount Everest base camp.

With more mountaineering enthusiasts attempting to scale Everest, the routes leading up to the summit have been engulfed with trash such as discarded oxygen cylinders, food wrappers, cans, plastic water bottles, kitchen waste and more.

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, tourists are restricted from visiting popular travel destinations. Nepal's climbing community seized the opportunity created by this tourism lull by coming forward and cleaning Mount Everest.

Coldplay Sponsors A Barge That Plucks Plastic Out Of The River

The rock band, Coldplay, has sponsored the newest 'Interceptor', one of the semi-autonomous watercraft developed by The Ocean Cleanup to extract plastic from rivers before it enters the ocean. The collaboration will broaden the net for the nonprofit's goal of launching an Interceptor in each of the world's most

New Zealand Raises The Minimum Wage And Increases Taxes On The Rich

New Zealand has raised its minimum wage to \$20 an hour and increased the country's highest earners' top tax rate to 39%. The new changes will be implemented on Thursday, 8th April, alongside small increases to sickness benefits and unemployment. The government has estimated that the minimum wage increase, a rise of \$1.14 per hour, will affect up to almost 175,500 workers and increase wages across the economy by \$216m.

The new top tax rate will apply to anyone earning above \$180,000 a year, which is about 2% of New Zealanders. The government has estimated that it will bring in an additional \$550m in

revenue this year.

OECD data revealed that New Zealand's previous minimum wage, as of 2019, was already among the top five highest in the world. Over the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the country's essential workers have been minimum wage earners – including those who work in the border jobs and at the airports and are considered the frontline defence against the virus.

Speaking about the changes this week, the prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, said they fulfilled a pre-election promise and represented "real and long-overdue improvements to the support we provide our most vulnerable".

Top Fine-dining Restaurant In NYC Is Debuting A Food Truck To Feed New Yorkers In Need

Eleven Madison Park, Daniel Humm's celebrated fine-dining restaurant, is once again partnering with Rethink Food, NYC-based food nonprofit, to help feed New Yorkers in need. They are launching a food truck – called Eleven Madison Truck – on April 12 to serve 2,000 meals a week in neighbourhoods throughout the Bronx and Brooklyn, Bloomberg first reported.

The three Michelin-starred establishments had flipped their space to become a commissary kitchen early on during the pandemic. They donated

up to 3,000 meals a day to collaborate with the nonprofit. According to Bloomberg, this new truck will be funded in part by diners who buy EMP's to-go meals – will target areas challenged by food insecurity.

"We had been brainstorming different ways to make the restaurant part of the community and get staff engaged beyond making meals and pushing them out of the door," Matt Jozwiak, Rethink's co-founder and CEO, told Bloomberg. "And then Daniel called me and was, like, 'Let's do a food truck.'"

polluted rivers—to 'turn off the taps' and catch the plastic along the river's course, thereby avoiding the much more difficult task of capturing it in the ocean.

The third Interceptor to be deployed will operate in the Rio Ozama in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The barges are connected via the internet, allowing them to gather performance and data.

The vessels can automatically notify local operators once the onboard dumpsters are full.

"Without action, there could be more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050," said Chris Martin and his bandmates. "We're proud to sponsor Interceptor 005, which will catch thousands of tons of waste before it reaches the ocean"

Britain's Former Coal Mine Is Being Transformed Into A Solar Farm And Battery Storage



A coal mine turned waste depot located in the northeast of England is to undergo a transition where the plot will utilize a wide range of sustainable technologies and several design features. The people in charge of the project hope over 1,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide will be saved annually to the changes. The £8.3 million (\$11.37 million) project to update the Morrison Busty depot in County Durham will centre around constructing a 3-megawatt solar farm that will power the site's operations.

Electric vehicle charging points will also be integrated into the development's design with a battery storage system. Natural gas heating will be substituted with air source heat pumps — devices which, as the Energy Saving Trust puts it, 'absorb heat from the air' — while office buildings will benefit from new windows and doors as well as LED lighting, among other benefits.

Breaking the funding down, £5 million will come from the European Regional Development Fund, with £3.3 million sourced from Durham County Council's Invest to Save fund.

Venice Bans Cruise Ships From The Historic Centre



On Wednesday, 31st March, Italian ministers agreed that large cruise and container ships would no longer enter the city's Giudecca canal, which leads to the historic St Mark's Square. The government also plans on holding a 'call for ideas' for an alternative cruise terminal in the city.

Dario Franceschini, Culture Minister commended the move, which he described as "a correct decision,

awaited for years."

Cruise ships are currently unable to enter the city of Venice due to the ongoing pandemic restrictions, but their absence has been credited with improving water quality in the lagoons.

Pressure to pass a ban on large vessels mounted in 2019 after a cruise ship crashed into a harbour in the city, injuring five people. However, no permanent solution was found.

World's Biggest Coal Company Invests In Solar Power



The world's largest coal mining company is to pursue solar energy and close smaller mines aggressively. Coal India Limited (CIL) plans to invest in a 3,000-megawatt solar energy project with state-run NLC India in a joint venture. The company also plans to compete in India's solar auctions and win projects by offering the lowest prices for clean power. It marks a significant shift for the firm, which produces most of India's coal.

The firm's solar project with NLC India will be worth almost 125bn rupees (\$1.73bn; £1.26bn), with CIL expected to invest roughly half of the figure by 2024. The group has closed 82 mines in the last three years and reduced its workforce by 18,600 employees. CIL's chairman Pramod Agarwal said he expected further reductions to the workforce, with the savings potentially reinvested into solar wafer production.

"Coal as you know, we're going to lose business in the next two, three decades. Solar will take over (from) coal slowly as a major energy provider in the coming years," CIL's chairman Agarwal said in an interview with Reuters.

Google Has Accelerated The Partial Reopening Of Offices And Put Limits On The Future Of Remote Work

One of the major U.S. companies, who were the first to send employees home last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, is setting new remote work guidelines as it is speeding up plans to get employees back to the office.

According to internal documents viewed by CNBC, Google is accelerating their plans to reopen in some parts of the U.S. on a volunteer basis ahead of September 1st, as millions of Americans get vaccinated by the day. Offices will reopen in a limited capacity with safety precautions in April based on vaccine availability and a downward trend in the COVID-19 cases.

"It's now been a year since many of us have been working from home, and the thought of returning to the office might inspire different emotions," wrote Fiona Cicconi, Google's new head of people operations, in a company-wide email on Wednesday. Cicconi has also advised employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine but said it's not mandatory.

Nasa Wants Private Companies To Build And Develop Space Stations For Them

NASA unveiled the Commercial LEO Destinations (CLD) project in March, with plans to award a hefty sum up to \$400 million in total to as many as four companies in the fourth quarter of 2021 to begin work on private space stations.

The agency is also seeking to replicate the

IMF Increases Global Growth Forecast, Says The Way Out Of The Economic Crisis Is "Increasingly Visible"

The International Monetary Fund is now expecting a more robust economic recovery in 2021 as COVID-19 vaccine rollouts get underway. However, it warns of 'daunting challenges,' given the different rates of administering shots worldwide. On Tuesday, April 6th, the group said it expects the world economy to grow by 6 per cent in 2021, up from its 5.5 per cent forecast in January.

Looking ahead, the global GDP (gross domestic product) for 2022 is seen

increasing by 4.4 per cent, higher than an earlier estimate of 4.2 per cent. The latest round of fiscal stimulus in the U.S. and the vaccine being administered across the world have made the fund more confident about the global economy this year.

"Even with high uncertainty about the path of the pandemic, a way out of this health and economic crisis is increasingly visible," Gita Gopinath, the IMF's chief economist, said in the latest World Economic Outlook report.

The Market Value For Cryptocurrency Tops \$2 Trillion For The First Time

The cryptocurrency market value topped \$2 trillion for the first time on Monday, April 5th, driven by a rise in ether, the second-largest digital coin in the world. According to the price-tracking website CoinGecko, in just over two months, the market capitalization of the cryptocurrency market has doubled as retail and institutional investors pile into space.

Bitcoin, the most prominent digital currency, accounts for over 50% of

the entire cryptocurrency market capitalization. Bitcoin has rallied over 100% this year alone, which has helped drive the cryptocurrency market higher.

Last month, bitcoin hit a record high of above \$61,000. The digital coin was trading at about \$58,800 on Tuesday, according to Coindesk data. But the latest boost in the cryptocurrency market appears to have been driven by ether, the digital coin that powers the Ethereum blockchain.

Grumman to send cargo spacecraft to the SpaceX and ISS and Boeing to launch astronauts. In a briefing, Phil McAlister, NASA commercial LEO Director highlighted that NASA had full ownership of all three activities previously.

"If it were to always remain that way, our aspirations in low Earth orbit would always be limited by the size of NASA's budget," said Phil McAlister. "By bringing the private sector into these sections and into these areas, as suppliers and users, you expand the pot, and you have more people in low Earth orbit."

The Filter Bubble Expert

Eli Pariser is an Author, Internet Activist, and Entrepreneur focused on making technology and media serve democracy and adhere to privacy laws. He is the Executive Director of MoveOn.org, where he helped pioneer online citizen engagement. He coined the term Filter Bubble and also wrote a book on the subject. He is known for questioning how tech platforms are reshaping public life.

The Founders of Moveon.org, Wes Boyd and Joan Blades were impressed by his petition and invited him to merge his efforts with theirs to make a difference which he readily accepted and joined the company in November 2001.

During the 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign, he co-created Bush in 30 Seconds and raised over \$30 million from small donors to run ads and back Democratic and progressive candidates that would serve the U.S. Democracy.

Pariser revealed in an interview, “After the election, I felt gratified that the idea that I had put out in the world was useful to people, but also worried that people were taking it a little too far. The filter bubble explains a lot about how liberals didn’t see Trump coming, but not very much about how he won the election. I think even if you’re talking about the conservative media ecosystem, my guess is that talk-radio, local news, and Fox are a much more important piece of that story than random conservative fake news.”

Journalist Geroge Packer wrote in The New York Times Magazine in 2003 and referred to MoveOn as the ‘mainstream’ element of what ‘may be the fastest-growing protest movement in American history.’

Pariser later shifted his focus and became concerned with web personalization based on individuals. He noticed a pattern of different responses to search engine queries based on a user’s past Internet search history, likes and preferences. It differed to such an extent that a person with a liberal orientation might get an entirely different set of responses than a conservative if they used Google, Facebook, or Yahoo to search for a phrase or term on the Internet.

For example, a liberal typing ‘B.P.’ might get information about the Gulf of Mexico’s oil spill. In contrast, a conservative typing ‘B.P.’ might get investment information about the oil company.

He anticipated the dangers of a hyper-personalized Internet that led to him coining the term ‘filter bubble’ to the lexicon in his 2011 New York Times bestselling book, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*.

Bill Gates, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, and other internet panjandrums have also taken to the stage to express their concern about this phenomenon. His 2011 TED talk on the topic, *Filter Bubbles*, now has over 5 million views.

Speaking on the topic of Filter Bubbles, Pariser said, “It hadn’t really fully occurred to me when I first had this image of a bunch of media sources and then a membrane or filter that surrounds a person that those sources get through, that the whole system would become self-aware in a certain sense—that

I think we need both private platforms that are more public-friendly, but also platforms that are publicly owned where people feel like they have real ownership. Because people behave really differently when they own something. They take better care of it.

the media organizations would grow autotrophically toward those bubbles. I think certainly that has happened. You can target very particular niches or communities and reach a lot of those people, and do it by understanding how that algorithm works and what it lets in.”

With his inclination towards democracy and educating the masses, in 2012, he co-founded Upworthy with Peter Koechley. The Media Company showcases civically important ideas and makes them popular. Within two years, the company has grown exponentially and had over 80 million monthly visitors.

In 2018, he began work on Civic Signals with Professor Talia Stroud, a project of the National Conference on Citizenship, intending to create more ‘public-friendly’ online spaces, a concept described in his 2019 Ted Talk.

Speaking on a business model for healthier digital spaces, Pariser said, “I think we need both private platforms that are more public-friendly, but also platforms that are publicly owned where people feel like they have real ownership. Because people behave really differently

when they own something. They take better care of it. Right now, nobody feels like they’re responsible for picking up the trash, so there’s a lot of trash around.”

He is currently an affiliate of the Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, a Langfield Visiting Resident at Princeton University, and an Omidyar Fellow at the New America. He is also one of the 25 leading figures on the Information and Democracy Commission launched by Reporters Without Borders. His agenda of building safe online spaces and protecting the people from the negative influence of the Internet has only just begun. He is on a mission to safeguard the interests of all the people.

In conclusion, Pariser says, “In a personalized world, important but complex or unpleasant issues are less likely to come to our attention at all.” That would leave us devastated viewing the stock market crash while in complete ignorance of the wars happening in Afghanistan or Syria for that matter. This is a fight we cannot afford to lose!



Image Credit: Startup Grind

The Curious Case Of The 4-Day Work Week



The four-day working week has been exponentially gaining attention. Governments across the world are evaluating the viability of the revolutionary four-day workweek concept and whether it will change the course of history.

The four-day workweek can be implemented in two ways: the first one consists of an overall decrease in hours and the second one highlights longer hours for fewer days.

How can a four-day workweek be viable?

While AI has been a controversial topic in the labour force, it is paving the way to implement the four-day workweek. Advanced technological developments are creating the possibility of the shortened working hours as humans are obtaining the ability to complete fixed work in lesser time without sacrificing consumer satisfaction and quality.

What additional benefits does a four-day workweek offer?

Companies are experiencing heightened levels of employee satisfaction and motivation stemming from the decrease in working hours. Companies have recorded an increase in company loyalty and collaborative spirit along with a decrease in stress levels. Liz Supinski, director of research and product for SHRM (the

Society for Human Resource Management) said, "Generally speaking, workflex variations are one of the least expensive ways to make employees happier."

Additionally, productivity and output levels are not damaged, proving that a four-day workweek is perhaps the answer.

Stanford University also conducted a holistic review to confirm the relationship between productivity and hours worked. Overworked employees correlated to less productivity compared to regular de-stressed employees. Nordic Countries such as Denmark, which are regarded as the world's most productive countries calculate an average of only 27 hours a week. Microsoft Japan also experimented and modelled productivity during a four-day workweek. A staggering 40% boost in productivity was discovered.

Furthermore, a four-day workweek is environmentally favourable. Microsoft Japan also found a 23% drop in electricity costs during their experiment. Employees tend to commute less and use fewer resources of office buildings if their hours are decreased, which leads to a sharp decline in the carbon footprint a company creates. The government of Utah also conducted a trial that decreased the workweek from five to four-days and concluded that it saved 12,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide, the equivalent to removing 2,300 cars off the road for one year. This conclusive

study proved that the effect of four-day workweeks is constructive.

Can the workforce improve and benefit through the four-day workweek?

Workplaces can advocate for higher gender equality by allowing employees to maintain a better work/life balance through a four-day workweek. It further enables female employees to maintain households and children peacefully, especially since studies have proved that women tend to bear a higher percentage of the burden.

A four-day workweek also leads to more satisfied employees who can help control the absenteeism and labour turnover rate. Newer generations also opt for companies that offer higher flexibility and variable opportunities, making the four-day workweek proposition an important aspect for potential employees.

Happier employees influence better communication and greater engagement, leading to an overall increase in the quality of the workforce and innovation.

Countries across the globe are currently evaluating the benefits of a four-day workweek. Spain is currently running the first pilot test with thousands of employees, while India is working on amending labour laws.

The Final Evaluation

The implementation and type of the four-day workweek play a crucial and pivotal part in the impact. Not all businesses can adapt to the four-day workweek; for example, direct retailers and businesses in the hospitality sector cannot benefit without losing customers and potential revenue. Supinski, said, "It's not that flexible initiatives can't be done; it gets more complex." This complexity makes the process taxing and extremely costly. Customers expect some businesses to be available 24x7. Cali Williams Yost, a workplace futurist and strategist noted, "You have to have serious logistics in place and be able to respond to customers and compete."

While implementing a four-day workweek can be complicated and tricky, with the right business model, workforce type, and preparation, it can prove to be successful and beneficial for employees and employers.

Easy Ways To Adopt Sustainable Living



Many of us want to take the sustainable route but do not know where to begin or if we can tick off all the boxes of sustainability. Being a vegan sounds so demanding to a person who loves meat, but even the most hardcore environmentalists admit that they aren't perfect in every aspect. It's a learning process similar to running a marathon; it all begins with the small steps we take to lead us across the finish line eventually. Listed below are some easy first steps that we put together that will make the transition less painful.

1. Reduce dairy and meat consumption

According to the scientists who have analyzed the damage farming does to the planet in an article by The Guardian, switching to vegan alternatives and not consuming dairy products and meat is the 'single biggest way to reduce your environmental impact on the planet.' The analysis shows that even the lowest impact dairy products and meat still cause more environmental harm than the least

sustainable vegetable and cereal grown.

The easiest way to begin is by having one vegetarian day per week that can slowly transition to a vegan day by cutting out the dairy products. If giving up a particular dairy item or meat is too difficult for now, for instance, cheese, start by cutting out other meat and dairy items and reducing the intake of cheese until ready to take the next step. In the end, it's about progress, not perfection.

2. Shop secondhand

Americans now buy five times as much clothing as they did back in 1980, which eventually ends up in dumpsters, according to research done by Mattias Wallander, C.E.O. of USAgain, a textile recycling company.

Think of quality over quantity and invest in pieces that can be styled for multiple occasions. With the bloggers picking up on the sustainability trend, it is now easier to find new ways to style a single top or dress to reduce our wardrobe and limit us from spending mindlessly. Thrift stores are also great alternatives to buy trendy and fashionable clothes; we would

recommend Maeven Vintage or ThredUp. This helps us save money while doing our bit for the planet. A win-win situation indeed!

3. Fix and mend things instead of replacing them

With the descent of speedy deliveries and e-commerce giants like Amazon, we can now order a new piece of furniture at the tip of our fingers, which leads to us often not second-guessing our choice to throw out the old and buy something new. But where does that lead us? With overflowing dumpsters and a waste management problem.

There's an easy solution for every broken shoe or broken piece of furniture. Cobblers near the subway can quickly fix a broken shoe in under 10 minutes, while a carpenter will have your furniture looking as good as new in 30 minutes. There are solutions all around us; it's up to us to find the most sustainable one.

4. Avoid toxic beauty products

Reading the ingredients list in a beauty product is a tormenting task. It is incredible how many chemicals you will spot, from carcinogens to endocrine disruptors – not only are they toxic to our planet, they are harmful to us as well.

Most safety regulations demand that manufacturers ensure that consumer goods comply with the 'general safety requirement', with no specific instructions to ban chemicals or carcinogens. This leaves it in the consumers' hands to be wise and choose products that are good for our skin and won't harm the planet. We recommend K.V.D. Vegan Beauty, Milk Makeup and E.L.F. Cosmetics.

In Conclusion:

We leave you with this quote by Julia Butterfly Hill, American environmentalist, "You have to hold yourself accountable for your actions, and that's how we're going to protect the Earth."

The Culinary Genius Feeding People In Need

José Andrés is more than a chef. He's an entrepreneur, a T.V. personality, a teacher, and a humanitarian all at once, heading up a constant stream of projects. He is one of the most influential proponents of Spanish gastronomy in the U.S. Spain. Its culinary beauty is now familiar to the U.S. public thanks to the determination and efforts of this great fan of cuisine 'Made in Spain.'



Andrés was born to a family who loved to serve people; both his parents were nurses by professions — and great cooks at home. “My mom could do anything with leftovers,” he reminisced. That led to his passion for cooking while not forgetting his parent’s advice to always help if you can.

In 2013, Andrés became a U.S. citizen, but his love for his country did not expire. He is very popular in Spain; he even starred in a famous Spanish cooking show named *Vamos a cocinar con José Andrés* that was a hit.

In Hispanic cultures, food, family, caregiving and community are tightly interconnected. In 2010, he founded the World Central Kitchen, the love child of his love for cooking and caregiving. It is a non-profit organization (NPO) that has dramatically helped serve a billion people across the globe. In 2010 the NPO responded to a massive earthquake that devastated Haiti and

Bill Clinton, Former President whose Clinton Global Initiative has supported World Central Kitchen, said Andrés’ empathic action is more crucial than ever in these divided times. “If you spend more time on your fears than your hopes, on your resentments than your compassions, and you divide people up, in an interdependent world, bad things are going to happen.”

killed millions. The goal of the NPO from the start was to provide food relief and longer-term resilience. They have gone above and beyond and have launched feeding missions in 13 countries, serving 15 million meals and corralling more than 50,000 volunteers with a burning desire to help people. In 2017, when the deadly Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, Andrés and his group delivered almost 4 million meals.

World Central Kitchen has a vast network of volunteer chefs that also provide education and empowerment — for instance; they helped Haitian families replace toxic fuels used for cooking with healthier and cleaner natural gas and solar power. “Pragmatic hard work, boots on the ground — these are the things that make good ideas succeed,” Andrés said in an interview. “We believe a plate of food can be the beginning of a better tomorrow.”

This work has brought Andrés multiple honours that include a James Beard award for Humanitarian of the Year and National Humanities Medal. In addition, he is also a renowned restaurateur who employs around 1,600 people in his 28 owned restaurants and two food trucks in nine cities (including two two-star Michelin Guide honorees, *Minibar* and *Somni*).

World Central Kitchen has figured out a rather vital feat to help feed people, rather than relying on packaged food that needs to be airlifted in from the outside—meals ready to eat (MREs) in relief parlance—Andrés and his team tap into existing supply chains and local chefs to prepare hot, nutritious meals.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization provides more than 300,000 meals per day to people in need throughout the country U.S. “Some of the first places where we began were homes for the elderly, from Washington, D.C., to New Orleans to Chicago,” Andrés said. He pointed out that older people living independently may not have family members nearby, so their hardships may not be only financial ones.

“We’re partnering with AARP, which provides solutions for programs like SNAP [the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] and the other forms

of food aid used by seniors,” Andrés said. “These programs are digital so that the elderly can order online and receive their meals at home.” (AARP is currently helping World Central Kitchen provide meals for older people in Washington, D.C.; the Bronx, New York; and Oakland, California.)

World Central Kitchen has also responded to COVID 19 by directing its focus on developing a rescue plan for the badly hit restaurant industry. In collaboration with a group of lawmakers, Andrés helped craft a bill designed to simultaneously feed people and save restaurants. The FEMA Empowering Essential Deliveries (FEED) Act would legally authorize the federal government to pay 100 per cent of the cost for state and local governments to collaborate with restaurants to serve food to those in need, as well as support farmers and businesses fighting to survive the pandemic.

As the organization’s profile has expanded, its revenues have ballooned from around \$650,000 in 2016 to \$28.5 million in 2019, as per their audit reports available on their site. They now have the wherewithal to hire local help and send out their operations experts to kick-start the food economy revolution.

Almost two-thirds of World Central Kitchen’s 2019 revenues, or \$19.1 million, came from individual donations, ranging from large gifts from philanthropists (including TIME’s owners and co-chairs, Marc and Lynne Benioff) to teenagers and kids giving \$10 out of their monthly allowance.

Bill Clinton, Former President whose Clinton Global Initiative has supported World Central Kitchen, said Andrés’ empathic action is more crucial than ever in these divided times. “If you spend more time on your fears than your hopes, on your resentments than your compassions, and you divide people up, in an interdependent world, bad things are going to happen,” Clinton, who first spent significant time with Andrés in Haiti after the earthquake said in an interview with TIME. “If that’s all you do, you’re not helping the people who have been victimized or left behind or overlooked. He’s a walking model of what the 21st-century citizen should be.”

The Transformation Leader Behind General Motors



Image Credit: GM Media - General Motors

Barra is the first woman to lead one of the big three automakers in the U.S., General Motors. She has done many notable acts during her career, including investing billions in electric vehicles, self-driving cars and a ride-share service called Maven. During the pandemic in 2020, she shifted G.M.'s production lines to make critically-needed ventilators to help Ventec Life System. Barra has the highest compensation of a Detroit Big Three automaker leader. G.M. has consistently scored highly in gender equity reports; in 2018, it was one of only two global businesses with no gender pay gap.

Barra was born to be a part of G.M. Her father was a die-maker at a Pontiac plant at General Motors for almost 40 years, Fortune reports. She was always captivated by cars. Barra was 10 when she first fell in love with a car. It was a red Chevy Camaro convertible, late-'60s vintage, driven by her older cousin. When Barra recalled in an interview with Stanford, "It was just a beautiful, beautiful vehicle. The first vehicle where I went, 'Wow, that is cool.'"

When it was time for her to buy her car, she had a hard time picking but finally settled for a Chevrolet Chevette, an affordable, boxy hatchback. She got her first job at G.M. at 18 when she participated in a G.M. program that gave her a college scholarship. She spent six months working for the company, initially inspecting fender and hood panels at a Pontiac plant.

Since graduating from Kettering University, Barra has been with the company, called the General Motors Institute, in 1985 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. According to Fortune, after graduation, she began work as a Senior Engineer at a Pontiac Fiero plant. She was soon recognized as someone with management potential, and G.M. sent her to Stanford Business School.

After getting her MBA, she immediately got her first job as a G.M. manager, running the manufacturing planning. Then she moved on to a series of demanding roles that she dealt with grace and panache. Starting with being the Executive Assistant to G.M.'s CEO in the mid-'90s, she fixed a challenging internal communications department, turned around a crucial and troubled Detroit plant, and brought data and efficiency to the company's complicated

human resources department, which soon earned her a spot on G.M.'s executive committee. She made her mark on the all-important product development side when she revamped a complicated management structure with three executives in charge of every car model.

In 2011 came her biggest test: She was appointed Senior Vice President for Global Product Development, determining the look, feel, and engineering of G.M.'s most essential products, despite having minimal experience designing or developing vehicles. Her manufacturing and quality background came through, resulting in a noticeable uptick in G.M.'s vehicles' quality and perception.

Barra does not like to dwell on the dark days before and after the company filed Chapter 11. During that time, she worked for days at a time, with little to no sleep. "It was a very difficult, and very humbling, time," Barra says. But she said she never doubted the company would survive. "We're going to get through," she says she kept thinking. "We're going to make it through."

In 2014, she was given the position of CEO and was named the First Female CEO in the Automobile industry. Being too close to a situation can sometimes become a handicap but in Barra's case, it would seem she turned her closeness into a strategic advantage. For instance, when asked why she reduced GM's corporate dress-code from 10 pages to 'dress appropriately' while she was running human resources, Barra told an interviewer: "It really became a window into the change that we needed to make at General Motors...I can trust you with \$10 million of budget and supervising 20 people, but I can't trust you to dress appropriately? It was kind of a step in empowering...so this really encouraged people to step up."

Barra took her understanding of the specific environment at GM and was able to capture the kinetic energy within the system to create positive movement and change. G.M. executives and outside analysts say Barra's approach is diametrically different, one that relies on team-building and seeks consensus. She holds 'hall meetings' to solicit advice

on project direction. She challenges engineers and designers to rethink their assumptions.

"My job is to keep with the technology advancement so that the consumers are able to choose," she said. "I want them to be able to choose what they drive because there's such a connection of how people pick vehicles, of what they like. So if we as a company have the right technology that allows us to deliver the fuel economy that is, I think, where the world is going, yet still offer a range of size and products to meet people's needs and wants, that's how we win."

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In her quest to redesign the company, Barra draws on her deep understanding of human and engineering dynamics. From a human perspective, she directs her energy by encouraging authenticity, courage, integrity, and resilience while also actively involving her team members in conflict resolution to identify and solve the problem faster. From an engineering perspective, she employs tried-and-true engineering principles – shared and aggressive goals, collaboration across functions and built-in feedback loops.

Her leadership philosophy is a straightforward and important one. She said, "At the end of the day, all businesses are about people first – because the only way we can build genuinely successful businesses is to build lasting relationships inside and outside the company."

Four Lessons Blackjack Can Teach You About Business

The game of Blackjack is synonymous with the casino. It is a simple game of cards that uses skill and mastery. While we often perceive it as fun and a quick way to make an easy buck, the game is packed with lessons that can help every entrepreneur can benefit from. Here are a few that we think are imperative for anyone in the business world.

Lesson 1: Develop a Strategy

A strategy is essential in any endeavor one undertakes. In the 1960s, Ed Thorp, a renowned Investor, Blackjack Researcher and Mathematics Professor developed a brilliant game strategy. The first part comprised telling the player when to hit, stand or double down based on the cards dealt, the dealer's card and the remaining components of the cards yet to be played.

Simultaneously, the second part focused on scaling the bet based on the cards previously dealt and the number of cards yet to be drawn. The original strategy is no longer valid because of the implementation of new rules. But it can still be utilized as a business lesson.

As an entrepreneur or a leader, forecasting and planning are crucial to the success of the business. It is imperative to plan for the future years of your business, strategize how to scale it and keep improvising the strategy with time. It would be best if you also devised

contingency plans for situations that may arise in the future. 'We'll figure it out when we get there' might be a risky proposition.

Lesson 2 – The Psychological Component

Mental resilience is one of the hardest lessons to learn. It is a game of luck and skill, and therefore, there might be several adverse outcomes before turning around the corner to experience sunshine. It's nerve-racking and soon becomes tough to make big bets during losing steaks. But you have to trust the process and your expertise and use it to your advantage and be positive that it will come to fruition.

Like in the game, it is vital to develop mental resilience in business. When you start a business, it's almost certain that there will be months where the company endures losses and takes time to pick up. You may have prolonged periods of stress, anxiety and fear that could make you question your decision of diving into business. During these testing times, it's mental resilience that will help you pull yourself out of self-doubt and stay aggressively focussed on the goals and dreams that fuel your fire.

Lesson 3: Knowing when to walk away

If you get into a game of blackjack 100% convinced you are going to walk away wealthy, you're in for a rough ride. If you

approach the game of blackjack under the assumption you'll turn even the most minor profit; you're opening the door to disaster.

The game of blackjack teaches us an invaluable lesson, knowing when it's time to walk away. Part of self-control is knowing when to call it quits in blackjack and business. There are times when persistence is critical, like the point above states. However, there are also instances where you need to accept that no more time, energy or money poured into something will yield you a good return.

Lesson 4: Be prepared for the unexpected

We all know the winning hand in the game is 21. Now, if you could have 18 on every hand at the blackjack table, would you accept the deal? The correct answer is no. A hand of 18 is more likely to lose than win. The devil is in the details; we usually understand the game's basic principles but do not go to study the intricate details of the game.

Being prepared for the unexpected is critical if you want to succeed in blackjack and life. Stay alert and prepared for twists and blocks in the road. Things don't always go as planned, and how you react when they go astray can significantly impact your ability to excel at the blackjack table and beyond.

In Conclusion:

The game of Blackjack is much like doing business and betting on innovation. As Henry Petroski, American Engineer said, "Betting on the success of innovative technologies in the marketplace can carry all the uncertainty and risk that betting on the next card in the deck does at a blackjack table in Las Vegas. There is a factor of randomness that must be factored in, but precisely how to do so is anyone's guess."



New Zealand And Its Progressive Approach



A country known for advocating for progress, change and improvement as opposed to wishful thinking, New Zealand has been a trailblazer in many important milestones: women's rights, the environment and employment rights.

The woman leading this movement of progressive change is none other than Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand. Her empathetic leadership after the Christchurch shooting in March 2019 was highlighted with images of a despairing hijab-wearing Ardern embracing Muslim New Zealanders. She went above and beyond and even consoled bereaved families after the Whakaari White Island eruption that December; and addressed the UN General Assembly while her fiancé Clarke Gayford cuddled their four-month-old daughter Neve in September 2018.

Her compassionate approach to politics – where “success is measured not only by the nation's GDP but by better lives lived by its people” – has caused many to see New Zealand as a bastion of progressive government.

Diverse Cabinet of Ministers

In October 2020, Ardern unveiled what she called an ‘incredibly diverse’ cabinet. According to SBS News, New Zealand's new 120-seat parliament features 12 LGBTQ+ MPs, up from seven last year, making the country home to the queerest parliament in the world. Ibrahim Omer, a former refugee from Eritrea, has also made history by becoming New Zealand's first African MP.

Former Finance Minister Grant Robertson was named Deputy Prime Minister, the first openly gay person to hold the position. The Maori community and women were also represented in the 20-member cabinet, including new Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta, a ‘moko kauae’ – a traditional Maori tattoo on her chin.

Policies And Legislation

The country has made some groundbreaking policies that the world needs to follow. The Prime Minister even handled the pandemic with such grace and panache that today New Zealand is one of the few countries that remain unaffected by the virus. Some of the legislation that we think are commendable are listed below.

Paid Leave For Couples

In March 2021, New Zealand's Parliament unanimously approved legislation that gave couples who suffer a miscarriage or stillbirth three days of paid leave, putting the country in the vanguard of those providing such benefits. It was only the second country in the world with this legislation.

Raised Minimum Wage

New Zealand is planning to raise its minimum wage to \$20 an hour and

increase the country's highest earners' top tax rate to 39%. The government estimates it will bring in an additional \$550m in revenue this year.

The changes were rolled out in March 2021, along with small increases to sickness benefits and unemployment. The government estimated the minimum wage increase – a rise of \$1.14 per hour – would affect 175,500 workers and increase wages across the economy by \$216m.

The Zero-Carbon Bill

The government pushed to indoctrinate its Paris climate change targets into law to show its commitment to fighting the threat of climate change. The centre-right, opposition National party, voted for it and devised a plan to tax farmers for their emissions from 2025 or earlier if they are not making progress on reductions. The Green Party Co-Leader and Climate Change Minister, James Shaw, was the policy's architect.

Sexual And Domestic Violence Laws

In 2018, a new law brought by the Green party enabled domestic violence victims to take ten days of paid leave from work over their regular holiday entitlements. The government also passed a law making strangulation a separate offence to common assault. It also pledged to create solutions to family violence holistic, multi-agency responses.

In Conclusion:

We would like to quote the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, “We aspire to be a government for all New Zealanders and one that will seize the opportunity to build a fairer, better New Zealand.” And we must applaud her efforts to keep with her promises and truly make the country one of the most progressive countries in the world.

The Man That Built Netflix And Conquered Hollywood

Reed Hastings, Co-Founder and CEO of Netflix, revolutionized the entertainment sector. He is also a very active educational philanthropist. He donated one million dollars to Beacon Education Network to create new charter schools. Hastings is also a member of a political network of Businessmen and Executives called Technology Network.

Netflix is one of the greatest underdog success stories. From humble beginnings to entertaining people all across the globe, especially during the pandemic, one could have only described the service as something god-sent. The marvel behind this genius service is Mr Reed Hastings. He has a master's degree in Computer Science from Stanford. Hasting first founded a software company named Pure Software before pioneering DVDs by mail with Marc Randolph.

In 1997, Hastings had the idea to create a subscription-based movie-rental service after he unfortunately incurred a sizable late fee when he failed to return a store-rented video cassette. He recalls it was a real lightbulb moment for him. At the time, DVDs were new to the market, but Hastings felt that they would travel well through the mail and potentially turn into a profitable business. He and Marc

Randolph, his business partner, incorporated Netflix in California in 1997 and started mail-order DVD operations in 1998.

Hastings became the CEO of Netflix later that year. When Netflix first started, customers were allowed to rent each DVD for a seven-day period only, but by December 1999, their subscribers could pay a set monthly fee to rent an unlimited number of DVDs. Although most of the process was done digitally, they selected DVDs and controlled their accounts via the Netflix Website; the DVDs were sent and returned via mail.

In the early 2000s, the company was incurring huge losses, and they decided to approach Blockbuster for a buyout. They met at the office, and Randolph recalled in an interview, "I had seen him use all the tricks that I'd also learned over the years: lean in, make eye contact, nod slowly when the speaker turns in your direction, frame questions in a way that makes it clear you're listening. But now that Reed had named a number, I saw something new, something I didn't recognize, his earnest expression slightly unbalanced by a turning up at the corner of his mouth. It was tiny, involuntary, and vanished almost immediately. But as soon as I saw it, I knew what was happening: John Antioco was struggling not to laugh." While John Antioco, Former CEO of Blockbuster, could have bought Netflix for 1/2600th of what it is worth today, hardly anyone had ever heard of streaming back then. Instead, the then-three-year-old company was only mailing DVDs but knew the Internet would eventually be the way forward.

"Selling had seemed to be our only way out. And Goliath didn't want to buy us – he wanted to stomp us into the ground. As long a shot as Blockbuster had been, I had genuinely held out hope that it would save us. Now it was clear that if we were going to get out of the crash alive, it was entirely on us," said Randolph. The pitch was ultimately rejected. But most importantly, it gave Netflix founders a new sink or swim resolve, which catapulted them to the position the company now finds itself in; pure bliss and streaming in profits.

Hastings eventually expanded the

company through movie studio partnerships and aggressive marketing campaigns, emphasizing Netflix's catalogue of indie films, documentaries, and other movies not readily available through other services. He is a big believer in internet television and had complete faith that it would be prominent in the future. So in 2007, he started streaming movies and TV shows to the users' laptops and computers directly without the hassle of mail.

Hastings made a rare misstep in 2011 when Netflix announced that it would increase rental prices and split the company in two, with the DVD service rebranded as Qwikster. The announcement resulted in customer confusion and a drop in sales. The situation escalated quickly, and Hastings was even asked to resign, but he refused as he had founded the company, and it was the first time in 12 years that the company was facing such a problem. But Hastings pulled through and managed to salvage the situation by scrapping Qwikster and by diverting his focus on growing Netflix solely.

He managed to craft a delicate balance: focusing Netflix on delivering quality movies while expanding gradually into original content. A few years later, after its transition from DVDs-by-mail to streaming was better established, it had a stronger foundation to build the original content that put it on an equal footing with rivals, like Time Warner's HBO, in luring customers and to build pricing power for a more profitable future.

The Netflix psyche is often referred to as unorthodox and is described in detail in Mr Hastings's book, written with Erin Meyer, 'No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention.' The book was born from the Netflix Culture Deck, a famous — and infamous — show of 127 slides that Mr Hastings put online in 2009. In a 2013 GQ article, it was hailed as possibly 'the most important document ever to come out of Silicon Valley' by Ms Sandberg.

Even Erin Meyer, a Business Professor, loathed some of the tenets at first and compared the company culture to the Hunger Games. But Hastings believes it

was essential to his revolution and the success of Netflix.

In the book, we see that Netflix generally ends up valuing the personal traits needed in an employee for a team to achieve their goals. This means it hires and promotes only those who fit its culture, and if they don't, they are asked to leave just as the slideshow dictates. Another key feature of their culture is constructive feedback — up, down, and across the organisation — on a continual basis. At Netflix, it is tantamount to being disloyal to the company if you fail to speak up when you disagree with a colleague or have feedback that could be helpful. After all, you could help the business — but you are choosing not to.

Hastings has a unique philosophy and does not think of his employees as a family but rather as a sports team and has to win trophies. "For people who value job security over winning championships, Netflix is not the right choice, and we try to be clear and non-judgmental about that," he shared.

One fired Netflix executive shared his view on the topic, "When Reed views somebody's contribution as less than the problems they're causing or potential risk, he gets rid of them. He's an extraordinary guy, but he's coldly rational and calculating. But the trade-off is, you get to go on this amazing fun ride, make a lot of dough, and when your number's up, your number's up."

Hastings shares about his managers: "To feel good about cutting someone they like and respect requires them to desire to help the organization and to recognize that everyone at Netflix is happier and more successful when there is a star in every position."

He added: "I find it motivating that I have to play for my position every quarter, and I try to keep improving myself to stay ahead." When asked if the Board would go ahead with such a decision, Hastings replied, "They really would do it," he said of the Board, "if there was a better leader." But he conceded, "I guess it's unproven, so I'm sure it doesn't generate a lot of credibility."

Image Credit: times.co.uk

Revolutionizing The Education Sector

Madelle Kangha is the Founder and President of JumpStart Academy Africa, a social venture seeking to transform African students by fixing their broken education system. In recognition of her work with JumpStart Academy Africa, Madelle has been featured by Forbes as ‘Innovative Africans fixing a broken Education System’. Madelle is also the Founder of Youths4Change, a youth-led community-based organization that mentors youth of Cameroon. Madelle’s vision is to be a leading social entrepreneur, a mass recruiter of local changemakers, a role model proving that citizens who channel their passion into action can achieve the impossible.



Madelle was born and brought up in Bameda, Cameroon. She studied at the Our Lady of Lourdes College, where she served as the House Captain and Assistant Senior Prefect. The latter earned her a prize for ‘Prefect of the Year’ in her last high school year that set the tone for her leadership journey.

Madelle said in an interview, “I guess I have always had a knack for leadership. I used to muse about becoming the first female president of Cameroon someday – and I still do, by the way. One of the most cherished moments from my Lourdes days was when I emerged as the best national female candidate at the Cameroonian GCE Examinations. Subsequently, I won a place/scholarship as 1 of 2 Cameroonians and 94 other young people worldwide to join the inaugural class at the African Leadership

“We can see the impact on the students and within the school. More students are becoming leaders. Within the community, the schools are now becoming the pride of their towns,” said Madelle. “For each student, the impact is different, but it’s still powerful.”

Academy in South Africa, and that is where I believe my leadership & entrepreneurial journey began.”

After attending the Leadership Academy, she had her sights set on the best course of education and applied to the London School of Economics. She got in and won a full scholarship awarded once every three years to one student from Sub-Saharan Africa.

At the London School of Economics, she studied a Dual degree in Law and Anthropology that she thinks has been invaluable in giving her exposure to interdisciplinary studies that are much needed in today’s interconnected world.

Upon graduating in 2012, she decided to start Youths4Change (Y4C), which opened a new chapter in her life. Y4C is a youth-led Community Based Organization that empowers and mentors

youth in Cameroon to hone their skills. Since its inception in November 2010, Y4C has successfully raised funds, conducted several activities, and set up new initiatives to help their youth. In June 2011, Y4C collaborated with enthusiastic Cameroonian youth from the University of Buea to set up the Mobile Education Network, voted Top Ten in the Harambe Cameroon Business Plan Competition.

Madelle said, “The quote best reflects my inspiration for Y4C “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

Madelle strongly believes in young people finding their voice through socio-economic empowerment and political participation. She said, “I firmly believe in the power of possibility. Nothing has ever fazed me even as a kid (my surname Kangha actually means “go-getter” so I guess there’s a correlation). I always had a “can do” attitude even when the odds are against me and my parents & family always encourage and believe in me.”

Madelle soon moved on to her next venture. She teamed up with Nigerian social entrepreneur Omotola Akinsola to offer an alternative to Africa’s broken education system. Together they decided not to build another school but to co-found Jumpstart Academy Africa. The Academy collaborates with existing schools in Cameroon and Nigeria to create improved learning environments that equip young people with the skills to make them assets for any work environment in the 21st Century.

The Academy uses a student-based, interactive approach to learning that cultivates critical thinking, ethical leadership, an entrepreneurial approach to problem-solving, and civic engagement, helping hundreds of young people between 14 and 18 become valued contributors to the job market.

“Students in sub-Saharan Africa leave school without the basic learning skills to escape the gravitational pull of mass poverty and to create opportunities for themselves in the job market,” said Madelle. “Building schools doesn’t necessarily result in higher literacy, post-

graduation employment rates or even increased education.”

Although the Academy has classrooms, halls sponsored by schools—“only a fraction of our lessons happen in the classroom,” Madelle said. “It means we have a deeper connection with the students, and we are able to challenge cultural perceptions, especially when it comes to the education of girls.”

Jumpstart’s student body comprises 70% girls selected based on their academic performance, ideas for local solutions and their drive to be changemakers. In the next two years, these high school students receive support and mentorship from local university students and professionals who help them put business, entrepreneurship, and community initiative ideas into action.

“We can see the impact on the students and within the school. More students are becoming leaders. Within the community, the schools are now becoming the pride of their towns,” said Madelle. “For each student, the impact is different, but it’s still powerful.”

Massa Civian Kiki, an alumnus of Jumpstart Academy and student of Government Bilingual High School Ndu, is one among the 100 success stories of the Academy. With over 1200 applicants from 23 countries across Africa, Massa Civian Kiki was one of the few students selected to be part of the Yale Young African Scholars 2014 Program’s inaugural class. While another alumnus, Joyce Pkwalekey, a student of Government Bilingual High School Down Town Bamenda, Cameroon, runs a small catering business and uses her revenue to purchase school books and uniforms without relying on her parent’s to pay for her education. Madelle continues to be the shining beacon of hope to the youth while helping them reach new heights in their career so that one day they could inspire and help others as well.

She hopes to reach more than 17,000 young people in the next five years. The Academy also aims to spread the model through partnerships and by working with the government to incorporate Jumpstart Academy Africa components into the national education curriculum.

Pay Transparency Is Critical To Reaching Equal Pay



In observance of Equal Pay Day celebrated on March 24, 2021, we decided to highlight the topic of sharing salaries that will eventually help us reach equal pay. According to the Gender Pay Gap Report for 2021, women make only \$0.82 for every dollar a man makes, which is one cent more than they made in 2020. The report also states that this improvement could be attributable to lower-paid women leaving the workforce due to layoffs that accompanied the pandemic.

However, even in 2021, we face the dilemma that not everyone believes that the gender pay gap exists. According to a SurveyMonkey survey of 8,566 American adults in 2019, 46 per cent of men and 30 percent of women believe that the gender pay gap is 'made up to serve a political purpose' and is not a 'legitimate issue'.

Part of the confusion lies in the misuse of the term 'gender pay gap.' The media, out of ignorance, sometimes reports the uncontrolled gender pay gap figure of \$0.81 to \$1 and then uses the phrase 'equal pay for equal work' that is inaccurate and can only apply to the controlled gender pay gap, which is currently \$0.98 to every \$1 earned by a man.

Speculative reporting can also sometimes undermine gender pay as a critical issue. In the case of Lisa Wilkinson's (Australian Television Presenter) pay row, there was

speculation whether her role was equivalent to that of her co-host, Karl Stefanovic. In response to allegations of gender discrimination, the network released a statement noting differences in responsibilities between the two media personalities. Wilkinson's commercial arrangements outside the network may have restricted her from engaging in digital and social media duties. In contrast, the co-presenter worked exclusively for the network, including on other shows. No conclusive and fact-based analysis was presented and she ended up quitting her job as her demands were not met.

According to the World Economic Forum, global gender parity will not be achieved with the current change and progress rate for another 99.5 years. So what can we do to fasten this process?

Experiment Conducted by PayScale

Using data from its platform, PayScale analyzed over 1.6 million survey responses in the U.S. on salaries. It looked at almost 400,000 responses from women who specifically spoke about pay transparency at their work.

For women who agreed that their organization was transparent about its employees' pay, PayScale found that women earned between \$1 and \$1.01, on average, for every \$1 a man earned at their company.

However, women who strongly disagreed that their organization was transparent about salary earned, on average, earned 97 cents for every dollar earned by their male colleagues who had the same experience, did the same job and lived in the same area.

Though a three-cent difference may seem minuscule, PayScale's CEO Scott Torrey points out that this difference in pay can quickly add up to a significant loss over the course of a woman's career.

When companies are open and transparent about the salaries they give all their employees, PayScale found that the gender wage gap in most industries and at all job levels disappeared.

Pay Transparency Is The Solution

There are many success stories of women standing up to get their rightful pay once they realized they were being paid less. For instance, when the Sony hack revealed that actress Charlize Theron made \$10 million less than her male co-star, Chris Hemsworth, Theron took action and got what was rightfully hers. It's a natural response; we all want to be treated fairly and get paid for the hard work that we put in. Finding out what other people earn makes the pay gap problem self-correcting. Women who work in organizations with open pay structures need not fear that their pay is not commensurate with their male colleagues; instead, they'll know if it's not.

In Conclusion:

After identifying a way to reduce the gender wage gap, we can see positive momentum towards pay transparency. As Scott Cawood, WorldatWork's President and CEO, said, "As organizations address potential areas of unintended bias with pay systems, it's reassuring to see that pay transparency is becoming more of a priority," and we are moving in the right direction.

Four Podcasts To Listen To Get You Motivated



bring you the top 4 podcasts to get you effectively motivated.

1) The GaryVee Audio Experience

Gary Vaynerchuk's podcast has captured interest worldwide. He often draws motivation from his journey of becoming an entrepreneur. Gary is the chairman of VaynerX and also has a diverse portfolio, that ranges from co-founding the first wine e-commerce to being the CEO of VaynerMedia-which exclusively deals with advertising for Fortune 100 companies. The podcast has become a massive favourite in the business and entrepreneurial world. Gary simply tells people how to succeed and features celebrities and successful businessmen to highlight marketing and business ideas. His podcast has featured actress Jessica Alba and NASCAR celebrities. Some of his famously treasured episodes are "It Seems Scary Until You Do IT" and "I Want You To Chase Your Purpose."

Available on: Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, SoundCloud, iHeartRadio, Google Podcasts and more

2) The School of Greatness

Motivation is a tricky concept, while it is easy to access a variety of motivational methods, finding one that is effective for you can prove to be challenging

"Push yourself, because no one else is going to do it for you" is a frequently heard quote but, sometimes one needs a voice to help get started.

Podcasts and digital audio content do exactly this. Podcasts have also become famously impactful in the past years as a source of motivation and it makes perfect sense why. Podcasts are free, can be availed at any time as per your schedule and help you get inspiration from the best in the industry. Moreover, the range of motivational podcasts is astonishing.

However, this range can make choosing a podcast difficult. To tackle this, we

Google Podcasts, Pandora, Stitcher and SoundCloud.

3) Art Of Charm

AJ Harbinger and Johnny Dzubak have become role models with their revolutionary podcast. With over 11 years of professional coaching experience and a specialisation in social skills, the duo hosts the Art of Charm catalogue of over 800 remarkable episodes. The duo also conducts "elite emotional intelligence" bootcamps. The podcast is especially treasured due to its extensive choice of topics such as relationships, performance-boosting tips, happiness and productivity tips. It also hosts moving interviews with experts and famous personalities. Best known for their empowering personalities, AJ and Johnny help you become your best self and excel in all areas of life. Some of their loved episodes include "Love, Money and Relationships" and "Essential Tools for Navigating Everyday Uncertainty."

Available On: Apple Podcasts, Play Music, Spotify and Stitcher

4) The Minimalists

Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus are creators of 'The Minimalists'. The podcast focuses on a truly unique topic: how to live life to the fullest. The podcast focuses on the more unconventional methods of success, such as obtaining peace. The hosts strive to make listeners feel more satisfied with their lives. They advocate focusing on the bigger picture and letting go of little things. The episodes are a refreshing break for anyone trapped in their routine lives. They help listeners chase the true joy in life and destress themselves to achieve more. The Minimalists podcast serves as a reminder that while success is important, the measures and definitions of it are unique and personal. Their best episodes include "How to Live Through This" and "Millionaires."

Available On: Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts and YouTube.

Available on: Apple Podcast, Spotify,

Building Communities With Kwiri Yang

Kwiri Yang is the Founder and CEO of LifeGyde, an education technology company that equips the next generation with interpersonal skills to thrive and lead in an exponentially changing world. She has built, scaled and sold four companies, including the latest one sold to Inc. 500's #1 fastest growing consumer electronics in the education technology space. Recognized as a 40 Under 40 Emerging Civic Leader, she volunteers her time building communities focused on education empowerment, social impact, and supporting next-generation leaders, second-time founders and female leaders.

Yang started her entrepreneurial journey as a teenager and bootstrapped her first company at the tender age of 16. She founded SK Technologies, a company that pioneered energy efficiency solutions for corporations.

The company helped save utility costs and benefited over 2,000 immigrant small and medium business owners in California. She played a crucial role in S1 filing, series D fundraising and growth strategy that took the company to over \$1B valuations with a 15,000% growth rate in 3 years, ultimately reaching 4.4 million users. By the time she graduated from the University of California Los Angeles at the age of 19, the company had already made over \$ 3M in profit.

However, during that time, Yang fell head-first into a bottomless pit of anxiety and depression due to the stress she was dealing with as the Founder of a big company at the young age of 16. She said, "I had to overcome circumstances relating to health and career that were entirely out of my control; I was in the dark and fell into depression. The shame, guilt and self-imposed expectations were overwhelming. I went to seek help from seven different therapists jumping through many hoops, switching from one therapist to another, which took considerable time, financial and emotional toll."

When she was on the road to recovery, she decided to open up and share her experience with close friends and supporters and was surprised to learn

that she was not alone in her struggle. In fact, many of her millennial peers from all backgrounds were battling a similar struggle with no proper means to attain emotional resilience to balance their life smoothly.

In hindsight, Yang says, "While I knew that there were many fantastic telemedicine platforms out there, what I found helpful along this journey was the importance of preventative care relating to mental healthcare. Many of the professionals and coaches I got help from were extremely helpful, and I wished I had those resources and guidance before getting to the point of anxiety and depression."

This intimate battle led her to open LifeGyde. The company helps fight the stigma around mental health and provides access to preventative information and advice. LifeGyde's mission is to equip the next generation with interpersonal skills, personal development transformation and social-emotional learning to increase self-awareness and emotional intelligence. The company uses technology to foster deep human connection as today's workforce continues to evolve to give the youth a better chance to adapt to the dynamic work scenario.

However, during her struggle with depression, she continued her journey and founded and sold three companies. Yang said, "Getting the ball rolling again after making

exits was the hard part — those were the parts that felt like transitions"

Yang recalled, "After my third startup was acquired by then-unicorn Fuhu, a children's tablet company, I transitioned to a senior role in the company, as their Head of Global Strategy. I was excited to have the opportunity to see a startup — named the company of that year by Forbes — go from Series C to IPO."

However, things soon started going downhill for the company; Yang had no

control over the company's decisions and the external factors that eventually led to Fuhu filing for bankruptcy before the IPO was even out.

At that point, Yang was at her lowest; she said, "I was emotionally and physically exhausted. I felt I had no more resources of my own to sacrifice. I only had other people."

This led to the inception of Second Time Founders, a community for transitioning founders to work on personal growth.

For entrepreneurs looking for the road ahead, the key is to find those people who can give you the tools, understanding, and support to confront your past regrets and recuperate real-life lessons from those experiences."

Yang said, "We're building a community where founders can exchange stories, learn about tools, and develop ideas on how to define their purpose and realize their true potential."

According to Yang, "For entrepreneurs looking for the road ahead, the key is to find those people who can give you the tools, understanding, and support to confront your past regrets and recuperate real-life lessons from those experiences." This is why she believes that 'Second Time Founders' is a great resource for entrepreneurs to learn from their mistakes and develop resilience by sharing with others who have dealt with similar struggles that led them to establish million dollar companies while also maintaining their emotional resilience.

However, as an entrepreneur, she says, the most rewarding part of her job is to pursue what she truly feels passionate about and challenge how things are done in the world. Yang said in an interview, "I am passionate about defying the status quo and disrupting the way that things are done when it's ineffective and does not create positive change in the world. Having my own business means never-ending hustling and having to deal with constant uncertainty. But by focusing on the journey and small wins, speaking to the customers and investing in people's lives, the journey makes it all worthwhile."



Image Credit: Network Capital TV

Through The Eyes Of A Botanical Illustrator

Nirupa Roa is a Botanical Illustrator based in Bangalore, India. She works closely with conservationists and ecologists to document the region's biodiversity. She has published two books, *Hidden Kingdom: Fantastical Plants of the Western Ghats* and *Pillars of Life: Magnificent Trees of the Western Ghats*, that focus on southern India's jungles through the eyes of a botanist. Nirupa has earned the title of a National Geographic Explorer and Storytelling Fellow and an artist-in-residence at Harvard's Dumbarton Oaks Research Center and Museum.



Image Credit: Wussy Mag

Nirupa's fascination with trees began when she was a kid, her parents are nature lovers, and her family circle is full of botanists and horticulturists. Her granduncle, the late Father Cecil John Saldanha, was a well known field botanist by profession who led the first mission to collect and catalogue the flora of Karnataka that commenced in 1978.

She recalls her childhood fondly in an interview with Paper Plans, "as soon as the holidays were upon us, my family and I would head to the Western Ghats. From when I was younger than I can remember, the grown-ups would take us cousins on trekking adventures, even if we had to sit on their shoulders most of the way up. This led to an automatic association of nature with fun and freedom."

She was introduced to the concept of Botanical Illustration by her Aunt Iris, who would regularly send them books from New Zealand, where she resided. The plant species captivated her as they were unlike anything she had ever seen before. She said, "Although, I didn't realize it. I started botanical drawing when my aunt sent me a

"Illustration was just a skill that I picked up. We would make our own plays, sets, gudiyas, sew our own costumes and much more. I didn't look at illustrations as a career until I made friends with the graphic designer at my first job."

telephone book." This telephone book was illustrated with the flora of New Zealand.

Nirupa soon fell in love with the plants and species in the book and ended up imitating almost every single drawing from there. While neither of her parents were artists, Nirupa and her sister were always encouraged to be creative. She recalled, "Illustration was just a skill that I picked up. We would make our own plays, sets, gudiyas, sew our own costumes and much more. I didn't look at illustrations as a career until I made friends with the graphic designer at my first job."

Nirupa wasn't inclined to be a botanical artist and is neither a botanist nor a trained illustrator. She completed her education in a completely different field and has a Degree in Sociology from Warwick University in the United Kingdom. "The love for nature was always there. She had also enjoyed painting as a child but didn't imagine a career as an artist. I had a narrow idea of who could be an artist; I thought one had to be flamboyant and spontaneous like a [Salvador] Dali or [Pablo] Picasso. I didn't know of other ways to be an artist," she said.

In a way, Nirupa feels her education in Sociology led her to become a Botanical Illustrator. In scrutiny of the ecological destruction around her, she thought it's interlinked to our culture: "We no longer feel the connection with our local plants. Only when we are familiar with our plants, we will love them and protect them," she reasoned.

When she started working, she came across some photographs shared by a Botanical Researcher, who was also her cousin Siddarth Machado. The sheer

elegance of the plants and flowers in those images inspired Nirupa to pick up her paintbrush and get to work to capture their essence.

She decided to take up an online course in Illustration and adapted the techniques taught to her requirements. She researched widely on the subject and applied for the National Geographic Young Explorer grant. "I had no experience in the subject. But I had an idea and I put together a portfolio with the help of my cousin Siddarth Machado who's a botanist, my sister Suniti Rao who wrote the text, and my photographer friend Prasenjeet Yadav. Maybe our idea of looking at plants differently, through an illustrated volume, appealed to Nat Geo," she recalled.

She soon published her first book, *Pillars of Life*, collaborated with naturalists T R Shankar Raman and Divya Mudappa from Nature Conservation Foundation based in Mysuru. "The book is a documentation of rainforest trees that are iconic to the Western Ghats," said Nirupa.

Her book titled the *Hidden Kingdom* was an interesting take on flora in the Western Ghats targeted to appeal to anyone above the age of eight. Living in Indian cities, we barely recognize the magnificent Gulmohar trees blooming on the sides of the road. With this book, Nirupa aims to educate India's children about the beauty that lies within our country. She said, "It is a fun yet informative book, featuring the weird and the whacky, the carnivorous and the parasitic, the poisonous, the stinky and the unimaginably valuable — the Charlie and the Chocolate Factory of the Plant Kingdom if you will. I want to show Indian kids (and anyone with an

open mind!) how interesting our plants can be."

To create the book, Siddarth drew up a list of plants whose stories he felt would interest readers. The project required the team to explore the Western Ghats, study the plants in their habitats and report back to Nirupa. She would do the illustrations back in Bengaluru. "It was a lot of work," she said, recalling the effort that went into getting the textures, shapes, size and colours of flowers and leaves as close to nature as possible. She cross-checked with botanists as well to be sure she was giving out the factually correct information.

After working on the book, she was more aware of a few common plants around her, like the basket fern: "After I illustrated it, I kind of saw it everywhere around me," she said with a smile.

"Essentially, botanical Illustration means painting plants. It lies somewhere between science and art." Historically, she said, it has been an essential profession as plant illustrations often accompanied medical recipes. The oldest surviving manuscript with plant illustrations is the Johnson Papyrus. It was painted in Egypt in the 5th century CE and depicted comfrey, an important medicinal plant.

Nirupa's area of interest comprises the Western Ghats, which is included in one of the world's eight 'hottest hotspots' of biodiversity. The region is filled with an incredible number of diverse species of flora and fauna. She came across plants such as the Neelakurinji that flowers only once in 12 years, that covered the hillside in a carpet of purple, delicate insect trappers and parasites that contain no chlorophyll at all.

Though the art of Botanical Illustration may have lost some of its prestige after the advent of professional photography, Nirupa is attempting to bring about a comeback for this valued art.

She said, "Even if you are not inclined to study the venation of a leaf if you see a painting of it you might look a little closer. It is a lens through which you can view an everyday object anew."

Why Tiktok Revolutionised Sequential Marketing

TikTok has proved to be the trendiest app since 2018. With over 850 million downloads in 2020 itself, TikTok has taken over the internet with its video-based content. It has also been a prominent opportunity for marketers with its ability to transform sequential marketing.

Sequential marketing uses a series of ads to direct prospective consumers to the business. It allows the customer to connect with the brand with a high recall value. No other media format can create this impact as much as videos, which is TikTok's USP and specialised focus.

Why is Tik Tok Used?

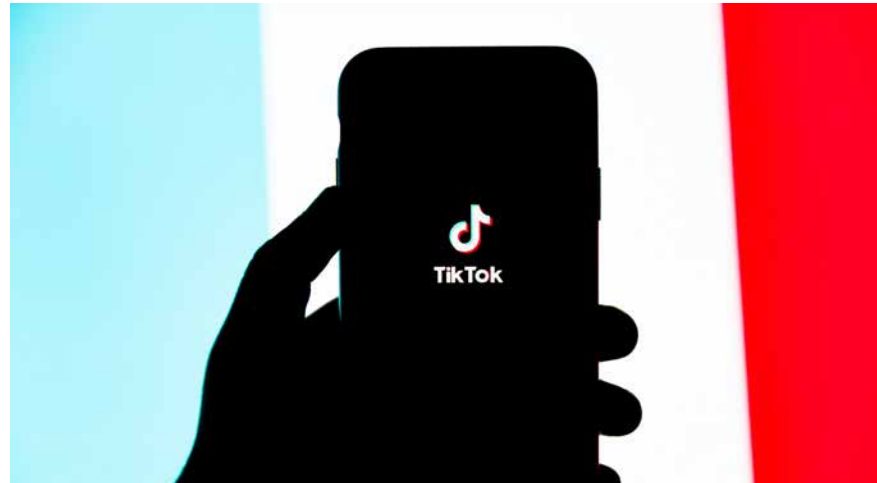
TikTok has created a new range of marketing strategies and possibilities. It has over a billion users, with 200 million in the USA itself. This enormous number makes it an attractive proposition for any marketer. Notable marketing agencies that took advantage of Google and Facebook to help their brands grow are now flocking to TikTok.

Sequential marketing was originally used via text blasts and emails. While these methods sound easy to implement, they often yielded ineffective results. TikTok has transformed this to create lifetime consumers.

How is TikTok used?

TikTok allows opportunities for businesses to convert their billion users into customers. Marketers first create content and use a combination of interest targeting and demographic targeting. Users that watch the majority of the video are identified using engagement levels (likes/comments). These users receive another ad. The second ad directs them towards the store/company website with a call-to-action button. Users are retargeted with ads until a purchase is made.

With smart advertising, marketers can make their ads seem more "organic" via content creators or official business accounts. Organic ads have a greater chance of effectively capturing the



consumer base since some users prefer to completely avoid ads and ignore them. This organic feature makes TikTok a more reliable platform in comparison to rivals such as Instagram and Google. A mixture of influencer marketing and sequential marketing can be used to maximise sales. Brands often build narratives during a series of TikToks to keep viewers engaged as well.

What are the advantages?

TikTok advertisements are not limited to specific types of products. Since the massive user base has a vast variety of demographics, you can appeal to any market that you want. This ranges from teenagers to even users aged over 46. It is also used in over 150 countries daily, proving that TikTok can cater to a diverse audience.

TikTok also offers an uncomplicated and cost-friendly method to adapt sequential marketing. If one has already identified a list of leads, they can be effortlessly uploaded on TikTok. Moreover, TikTok offers extreme artistic freedom for ads. From challenges, dances, mimicry to pranks, TikTok arguably allows high levels of creative innovation and flexibility. Altogether, this makes TikTok an extremely cost-effective platform with a high return on investment and efficacy level.

Through filtering and resourceful market

segmentation, TikTok seamlessly brings potential consumers and businesses closer. It further offers a holistic breakdown of your consumer base for filtering, ranging from language and interests to even device prices. Businesses are able to create custom audiences and exclude lookalikes as well. Moreover, Tik Tok offers Interest Targeting and Behaviour Targeting. Interest Targeting allows businesses to respond to users with high interest in their products. This interest is determined using views and clicks. Behaviour targeting allows advertisers to interact with users based on their recent behaviour on TikTok.

Overall, the TikTok logistics and business help centre offer extensive creative opportunities for marketers and businesses to implement sequential marketing and help make it as effective and beneficial as possible. In a world where sequential marketing was difficult and time-consuming, TikTok has created opportunities for businesses to interact with consumers through a convenient, interactive and enjoyable method that has also translated into high recall values and larger consumer bases. From TikTok's vivid and impactful storytelling abilities to sponsored hashtag challenges, advertising and marketing on TikTok have become a critical platform for every business to be on.

Five Ways To Improve Your Company's Culture

Writer Annie Dillard once famously said, "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." For many of us, a large portion of our days is spent at work. Many employees find themselves living at the weekends, but it is also the weeks which must count.

Company culture can make or break the organization and is evident in how an organization's employees interact with each other, their values, and their decisions. This culture lays the foundation on which rests many responsibilities like happiness, success and motivation. How can a company genuinely reap the benefits of a dedicated and motivated team? It is by engaging in a positive organizational culture.

Here are five ways in which a company can substantially improve its culture:

1. Efficiency in Communication

As cliché as that might sound, communication, when done efficiently, helps in removing multiple barriers amongst a team. As the saying goes, 'communication is key.' By effectively communicating your company's culture, values and mission, you help your team come on the same page. It also helps in reaching a unified goal. According to Harvard Business Review, employees who say their organizational values are "known and understood" are 51 times more likely to be fully engaged than an employee who responds that their organization does not have values that are known and understood. Millennials today look forward to creating a positive impact in an organization. Effective communication shifts your employee's mindset from a cog in a machine to a vital part of the team.

2. Socialize with New Employees

Getting new employees familiar with your company culture requires much more than a formal talk with a presentation. The heart and soul of company norms can't be studied through formal learning.



They are learned through informal exchanges between new employees and co-workers. This is where the importance of the socialization process comes into play. It highlights the influential role of co-workers and supervisors in effectively socializing newcomers. Employee retention is increased by 82% with a great employee onboarding programme

3. Make Feedback a Way of Life

A boss might be the leader, but even he could do with some feedback. With the work landscape changing, managers will need to be prepared to receive feedback from employees. With power distance reducing in companies, this will be the new norm. What does this mean exactly? Millennials will now have to learn to give feedback, while seniors will have to learn to take feedback and improve their processes to become better leaders that serve their employees. According to statistics, 75% of employees would stay longer at an organization that listens to them and makes them feel a part of the team. Make critical feedback a way of life in the organization, where one grows along with the progress.

4. Recognize and Reward

Your employees are a part of an intimate setup that works for their betterment as much as they work for the organization. Every work well done needs to be

appreciated. Positive reinforcement goes a long way in an organization where there is healthy competition. Rewarding your best performers motivates them further and helps others get inspired to perform well. These rewards and recognition programs don't have to be extravagant. It could be a few words of recognition or a bonus to show appreciation.

5. Try Gamification

Renew the glory of your company culture by turning boring training materials into fun games for your employees. Gamification will keep employees' motivated and learners coming back for more with high levels of enthusiasm. This makes for the perfect, fun environment to reinforce your organizational culture. Research by the Aberdeen Group discovered that organizations who deploy gamification improve engagement by 48%.

Business and its culture are both pieces of the same cloth. They work together to create a meaningful relationship between the employees and the organization while providing many positives along the way. A company does not work only for profits. After all, the ultimate goal of a company is not only to fulfil the organization's mission and vision but also to keep its employees happy in a positive environment.

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“Lead and inspire people. Don’t try to manage and manipulate people. Inventories can be managed but people must be led.”

— Ross Perot

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