

# GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

Issue 5 | Volume 1

May 2021

## LEADING THE MAVERICKS TO VICTORY

Rising To The  
Ranks Of Business  
Extraordinaire

### ALSO INSIDE

The Fight Against  
COVID-19 Vaccine  
Misinformation


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How Brands Can  
Spread Positivity  
Through Marketing


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## From the Editor

Dear Readers,

This edition entails pieces on subjects that impact us daily as we continue to work remotely and the battle against the pandemic rages on. Our team has meticulously curated a spread that I am confident you will enjoy reading.

Our cover story Mrs Cynthia Marshall is a force to be reckoned with and shines a light on how roadblocks in our lives shape us into strong, confident individuals. Despite coming from a troubled home and being diagnosed with cancer, she did not let that hold her back and emerged victorious to head the Dallas Mavericks and take the company to new heights with a glorious transformation.

Our thought leadership articles have been meticulously curated and highlight the misinformation being spewed about the COVID-19 vaccines while also addressing common concerns that would help boost productivity and team spirits while working remotely.

I would like to commend the entire team for putting together this issue. And to you, my dear readers, I truly hope you feel inspired and empowered after reading the May Edition.

Warm Regards,

**Sherlyn Gomes**

Editor at Global Leaders Today

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Global Leaders Today

# GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

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## COVER STORY

# Leading The Mavericks To Victory

Cynthia Marshall has broken down barriers and made waves her entire life while battling through various challenges. Marshall is the first Black woman to lead an NBA team, currently serving as the CEO of the Dallas Mavericks. During her time with the Dallas Mavericks, Marshall has transformed a previously toxic and misogynistic culture into an inclusive environment where everyone can speak up and have a voice.

*Written by Sherlyn Gomes*

Image Credit: Zippia

Marshall had a traumatic childhood, she dealt with an abusive father and had little to no money growing up. When Marshall was 15, her father slapped her and broke her nose as she tried to protect her mother from his violent rage. That one incident gave her mother the courage to leave with her 3 children; never to return.

But Marshall says she learned to ‘weed out the distractions’ at an early age and stay focused on what she wanted to accomplish. She found comfort in books and sports and gave due credits to her mother, Carolyn Gardener, for always making education the top priority in their house. “My mother put a math book in one hand and the Bible in the other,” Marshall said in an interview.

Marshall was thoroughly dedicated to academic pursuits in school which paid off when she bagged a full scholarship to the University of California, Berkeley, to study Business Administration and Human Resources Management. The University was the first of her many milestones and instances of breaking barriers. She became the University’s first African-American cheerleader and enjoyed football.

Marshall said, “Praying has always helped her cope when people said negative things about her on the football field. I prayed a lot because I had to keep my spirits calm. It’s the kind of stuff that can get you really upset, when you hear some of that stupid stuff,” she said.

After graduation, she had 13 job offers lined up. She took the one that offered a brilliant fast-track management program, and that paid the most as well: \$16,800. She worked her way up the corporate ladder and eventually secured the position of President of AT&T in North Carolina that later turned to Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Vice President of Human Resources for the National Corporation. She worked with AT&T for 36 years.

When she started, she managed long-distance operators in San Francisco’s Mission neighbourhood, “back in the day when you had to dial 0,” and most of the operators were “old enough to be my mom,” Marshall said.

“You have to try to understand people and then ‘meet them’ where they are,” said Marshall. When she started working, Marshall noticed that the operators were not allowed to go to the washroom until the light above their station went off. She proposed a new system by which the operators could trade-off and go to the bathroom when needed instead of being dictated by a light switch. When the supervisor approved the system, it was a big success, and the division showed tremendous results. The moral? “Treat people like humans,” she said.





Image Credit: United Talent Agency

In 2010, she got a disturbing call from her doctor: “I have news. It’s bad, and it’s significant.” Marshall was detected with stage 3 colon cancer, one lymph node away from being stage 4. However, she had complete faith that she would beat it. She wrote an email to her boss with a message that she asked to be shared with all of her colleagues: “I was uniquely qualified to get through this. And by the end of the summer, I will not have cancer.” By the end of that summer, Marshall beat the dreaded disease and was declared cancer-free.

She previously intended to retire after her kids graduated and the cancer battle was won; however, opportunities kept coming to help other people achieve success, and Marshall was not one to say no to helping others. When she finally did decide to retire, Dow Chemical Company invited her to help pioneer an inclusion program, and she was thrilled to be part of such a brilliant initiative. Before the project had even ended, Mark Cuban called from the Mavericks a start to a whole new journey. “I felt like I was being called into service,” says Marshall, looking back. “For the sisterhood.”

Inclusion and diversity are two different things, Marshall explained. “Diversity is about numbers and representation. Inclusion is how to create a culture that’s welcoming.” Both are still a work in progress. She took the position at the Dallas Mavericks to help tackle both.

In the beginning, she didn’t know she was going to take the Mavericks job. She didn’t even know who Mark Cuban was when he called to talk to her. It was her husband who told her, “You really need to take this call.”

Even after she researched the company, she was determined to say no and



Image Credit: CNBC

There were no women or people of colour on the Mavericks’ leadership team when Marshall started. Today, according to a Mavericks spokesperson, 50% are women, and 47% are people of colour.

walk away. “What woman would want to come here?” she remembers thinking. But when she visited, she recalled, “I saw people hurting and in pain.” Cuban wanted to find a solution.

However, changing a toxic culture does not happen overnight. But Marshall was no ordinary woman, she made a plan to achieve it in 100 days.

Marshall outlined six core values that the Mavericks employees should live by. These are Character, Respect, Authenticity, Fairness, Teamwork, and Safety, or CRAFTS for short. Marshall said these values guided every decision the leadership team made. This visible commitment helped ensure that the values were felt in the halls, rather than just being written on the walls.

To keep tabs on the cultural transformation, Marshall also established an inclusion council. This council is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the Mavericks’ employee resource groups and determining whether more or less groups were needed.

She has also tackled operational effectiveness, one key aspect of this was addressing pay equality. When Marshall first arrived at the Mavericks, women were not earning the same amount as men for equal work. To help her team grasp the importance of closing these gaps, she showed them a video created by the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) in which children are asked to do chores only for the boys to get paid more. The kids’ shocked reactions serve as a reminder that just

because something’s common, that doesn’t mean it’s right. The wage gap was instantly rectified.

Since taking the role, Marshall has focused on hiring a diverse executive team. There were no women or people of colour on the Mavericks’ leadership team when Marshall started. Today, according to a Mavericks spokesperson, 50% are women, and 47% are people of colour.

Looking back, Marshall said she managed to achieve her 100-day plan because she led with intention, insight, inclusion, and inspiration. “I call it going all in,” she said.

Marshall hopes her work with the Mavericks will set the standard for inclusion and diversity in all sports organizations. “You don’t get results if you don’t take care of people. And so, that’s why I come to work every day. Literally, that’s what gets me up in the morning,” she told CNN in an interview.

These days, Marshall says she tries to think of ‘the person first and the employee second’ when making important decisions. As for the naysayers, who still exist, she says, “I usually take the haters head-on.”



# Empowering The Homeless

Alex Stephany is the CEO and Founder of Beam, the first platform in the world to crowdfund homeless people for employment training and support them into skilled work to start their life again. Beam has won several awards, including Best Financial Inclusion Startup in Europe from MIT and Best Tech for Good in Europe. Stephany is an expert on the sharing economy and has authored a book called *The Business of Sharing*, published by Macmillan in 2015.

*Written by Alexis Miller*

*Image Credit: alexstephany.com*

Alex Stephany started his career as a Corporate Lawyer at Clifford Chance LLP and later moved into Management Consultancy. However, he wasn't happy working as a Management Consultant and started seeking new opportunities and chanced upon the tech sector.

He was in the process of starting a marketplace for independent retailers (much like Trouva). But he was presented with an incredible offer at a VC-backed startup, JustPark, to be their COO, which he instantly accepted to accelerate his learning curve. JustPark is an innovative solution to the 21st-century parking woes. It generates millions of pounds annually for property owners by renting out their parking spaces to people in the vicinity who cannot find any parking space. Simultaneously, its web and mobile applications provide cheap parking to over half a million drivers.

A year later, Stephany got promoted to CEO and led JustPark's equity crowdfunding campaign to raise £1 million on CrowdCube. It was one of the biggest crowdfunding campaigns for a tech startup at the time, reaching a whopping £3.5m. Stephany recalled, "I remember thinking 'what if we could use this power of crowdfunding for social good?' That idea found an outlet several years later in Beam."

Stephany is a big advocate for social issues. "I was raised with this idea that if you are in a position to give back, it is something that you should be doing, it is not this kind of, nice thing to do, it is a real responsibility and an obligation," said Stephany.

He soon reached a point in his career where he became adept with tech skills and started seeking ways in which technology could be adapted to address rampant social issues.

The idea of Beam was born when he became friends with a homeless man by the Tube station. Stephany recalled, "He was a man I walked past if I am honest, a load of times. But one day, I stopped to say hello, and he told me he would sit on the steps by my Tube station

because there is CCTV, which made it less likely that he'd be attacked. I would bring him cups of coffee, and I would bring him pairs of socks when I knew he was getting cold, and one time he just disappeared. When he reappeared, he looked terrible and I said: What happened, where have you been? And he shrugged to say that he was at a hospital after having suffered a heart attack."

The encounter left a profound impact on Stephany who instantly began searching for ways he could help the homeless people in the vicinity. He decided that he wanted to empower them in a way that would allow them to lead self-sufficient and independent lives. He decided that the best way to achieve this outcome was to help them develop skills that would get them absorbed into the workforce.

He began doing his research and spent a considerable amount of time working with homeless people and engaging and interacting with numerous charities that help homeless people. After having conducted his research, his statistics showed that for every homeless person on the street, there are at least 5 people living in homeless hostels, women's refuges, and different types of emergency accommodation. Stephany said, "So it is a huge group of people, more than a quarter of a million strong in the UK, without the opportunities they deserve."

Beam was officially launched in 2017; the organization crowdfunds new career opportunities for homeless men and women, provides them with a support network, and raises funds from kind strangers to financially pay for their skill training and development.

Stephany recalled the first person whose life they had transformed, "The first person we supported is a man called Tony. Like the overwhelming majority of homeless people in the UK, he lived in a homeless hostel so he had a roof over his head but a real lack of opportunity. I met with him and told him about Beam. He didn't say anything for the entire meeting, apart from at one point when he said: 'I don't understand. Why would

"I was raised with this idea that if you are in a position to give back, it is something that you should be doing, it is not this kind of, nice thing to do, it is a real responsibility and an obligation."

anyone help me?' It was a real punch-in-the-stomach moment when I realised that one of the key problems faced by the long-term unemployed is a lack of confidence and belief, even though there are millions of people who would want to support them."

Stephany continued, "I explained that I thought people would care but I couldn't make any promises, and he trusted me enough to say he'd give it a shot. We went to see some electrical training providers who said they would teach Tony to become an electrician if we could get the money together, and we built his campaign. I picked up the phone to a number of journalists, who started writing about us, and Tony's campaign was funded within about a month. Since that moment, we've supported more than 160 homeless people."

Beam uses technology to find scalable solutions to the most challenging social problems - starting with homelessness. By donating to Beam, members of the public are supporting a homeless person for the long term. 100% of donations are used for charity purposes through their unique model, which sees their overheads funded separately by philanthropists and foundations.

In conclusion, he says, "Everyone at Beam is an optimist, otherwise, we wouldn't be working on these problems. And I think that people have an inherent desire to help to alleviate suffering, and that's part of being an emotionally functioning human. It makes us happy to do that. It releases oxytocin and other chemicals that make us feel good, that's why we like doing work that matters and that is purposeful."

# The Glamorous Shark

From Entrepreneurship to Event Planning and Reality TV, Bethenny Frankel has done it all. She is a breath of fresh air with her unapologetic take on life and unique perspective in a world of mediocrity. Her podcast, Just B, is unlike any business podcast and offers new insight into various topics. She uses her platform for good—Frankel’s philanthropic work through her charity BStrong has raised awareness and money for causes worldwide. She is rewriting the rules of success one venture at a time.

*Written by Brianna Da Cruz*

Frankel was born into a hustler’s family and was raised on the racetracks where she lived with her father and stepfather, both of whom were horse trainers. From a young age, she was exposed to gambling and was surrounded by ‘unsavoury characters’. Of this exposure, Frankel said, “You’re prepared for anything, there’s competition there; there’s speed; there’s money; the stakes are high.”

Frankel attended the Natural Gourmet Institute in New York City at Boston University for two years that later helped her tremendously in her venture as a professional baker.

Frankel recollected her 20s and said in an interview, “I consolidated debt after college, slowly but surely paid it off, and never got in credit card debt again. I walked everywhere except at night. I didn’t go out to dinner unless someone else was paying, and I hustled by cooking for people and selling items in my closet. I would always find ways to work for extra cash.”

Frankel shifted to Los Angeles in 1992 with the aspiration to become an actress. However, her dreams were short-lived, she found out that she did not particularly enjoy acting as she was not in the power position. Frankel said, “I remember saying, How do I do something where I can be myself?”

She started exploring various roles and worked as a Personal Assistant to Jerry Bruckheimer and Linda Bruckheimer and was also a nanny to Paris Hilton. Simultaneously, she worked as a Production Assistant. She started building her connections and leveraged this network to start her first company, a party planning business named ‘In Any Event’, which was unfortunately short-lived. But that did not dampen her spirit. Her next entrepreneurial project was re-selling pashmina scarves that she acquired from an Indian Manufacturer.

In 2003, she tried her hand at baking and started a business called ‘BethennyBakes’, that focused on ‘healthy cookie’ deliveries in the city of New York. This got featured on a reality competition series, The Apprentice: Martha Stewart in 2005. Frankel made it to the finale in the show. BethennyBakes eventually shut down in 2006, but Frankel retained her role as a spokesperson for Pepperidge Farms low-calorie line.

In 2008, Frankel got her breakthrough and began starring in the reality television series ‘The Real Housewives of New York City’ that opened up various avenues for her as an entrepreneur. Frankel said, “On the show, I was on my own, and I was broke. I wasn’t buying diamonds and getting facials. The decision to go on reality television was single-handedly a business decision.

It was frustrating to constantly be referred to as a ‘reality star.’ I didn’t want to be in magazines about what shoes I was wearing, and I didn’t want to just be in the gossip pages. I wanted to be known as an entrepreneur and a businessperson. It was a strategy from Day One.”

After three seasons, she decided that it was time to quit. And one day, genius struck, Frankel said, “I thought, Everybody wants to have a margarita, and nobody wants to feel guilty about it.” Frankel created a prepackaged margarita line, named Skinnygirl Margarita. The cocktail had approximately 100 calories per five-ounce serving while the average margarita ranges from 350 to 750 hefty calories, due to a premix or limeade, triple sec and tequila.

She said, ‘All the big liquor companies turned me down. Publicists wouldn’t even come with me to the meetings because they didn’t take it seriously. So I would go alone and sit in boardrooms with people who probably just thought I had a silly little idea. They didn’t see what I saw.”

But Frankel followed her gut instinct and continued to persevere. She said, “There was only one person who did get it, David Kanbar, a liquor industry veteran. He ended up being my partner. We manufactured the product, the bottle, the cap, and the design and got

I took one little acorn of an idea, and when people said, ‘No, no, no,’ I said, ‘Yes, yes, yes.’ I worked hard, I did it on my own, and I busted my ass the whole way.

it to the market in less than six months. It exploded. We couldn’t keep up with the demand.” The company expanded exponentially and is a big brand to date.

In June 2010, Frankel starred in the Bravo reality series Bethenny Getting Married? (later retitled Bethenny Ever After), that documented her engagement and marriage to Jason Hoppy as well as the birth of their daughter. The series premiere became Bravo’s highest-rated one at the time, garnering 2.1 million viewers that Frankel smartly used to promote her skinny girls’ brand.

When she decided to sell the business, Frankel recalled, “I didn’t necessarily want to sell, but Beam Global (The company acquiring SkinnyGirl) was willing to let me be intricately involved. My partner said it would be financially irresponsible not to do it. Ultimately, it was a business decision, not a monetary decision. I partly did it for the street cred, and I think I got it.”

She continued, “Once in a while, you see a person who used to treat you like a dog because you were nobody and they were somebody. You get a little giggle, and you really love it. But it’s more about looking to women and saying, ‘Look at what you can do.’ I took one little acorn of an idea, and when people said, ‘No, no, no,’ I said, ‘Yes, yes, yes.’ I worked hard, I did it on my own, and I busted my ass the whole way. It’s been a long time coming.”

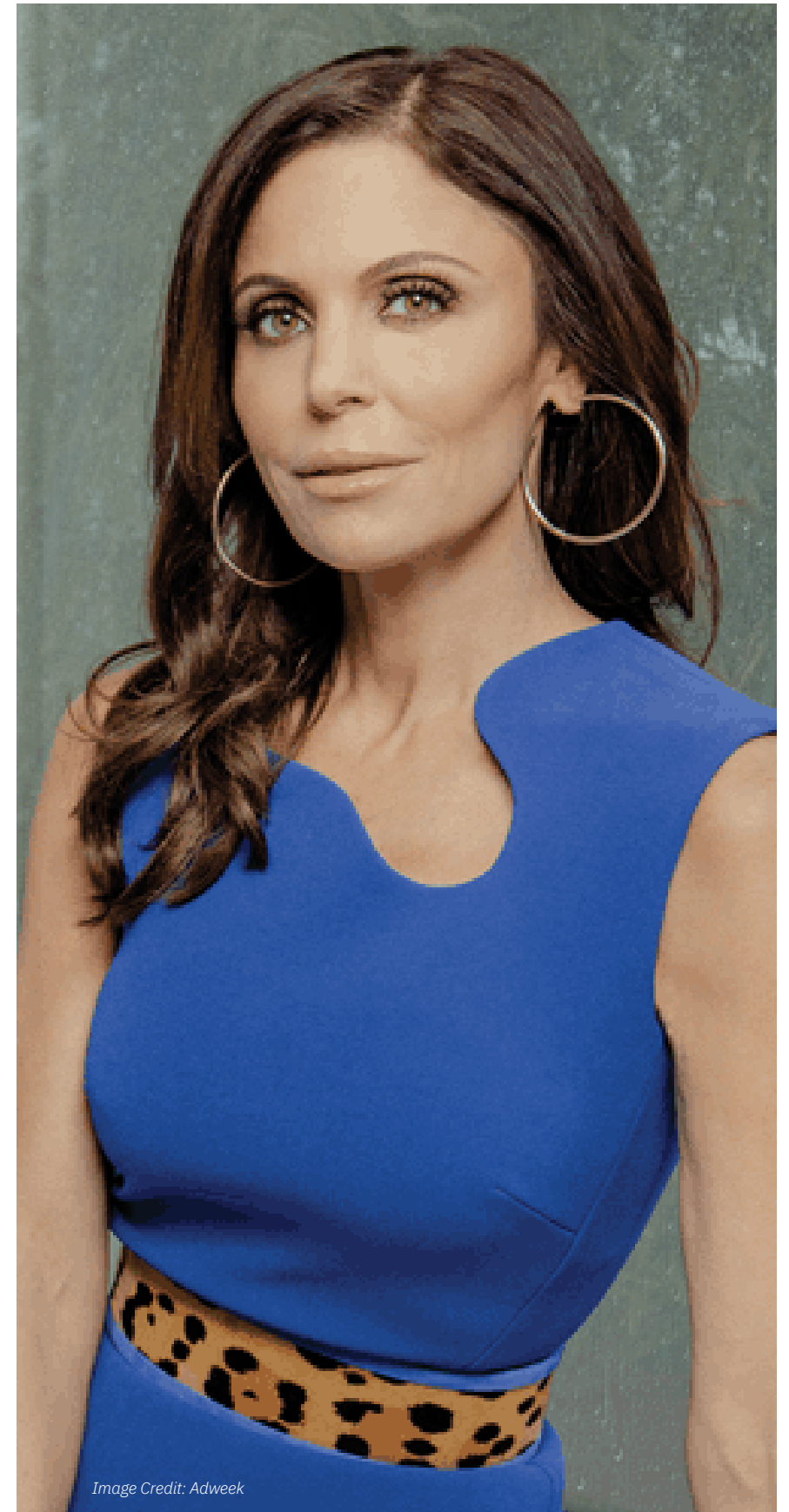


Image Credit: Adweek



# NEWS

## Bhutan Delivered Vaccine Shots To 93% Of Adults In Two Weeks



According to its Ministry of Health, in less than two weeks, the country administered first doses to more than 93 per cent of eligible adults. Bhutan has delivered the first vaccine doses to a larger share of its population than any other nation besides Seychelles. It has outpaced developed nations, including the United Kingdom and Israel, that have implemented aggressive vaccination drives for several months.

According to Bhutan's Ministry of Health, by April 8, almost 472,000 people ranging from 18 to 104 years in age have been vaccinated. Officials are now asking the few remaining to get their shots, noting that King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck has indicated that he will not get vaccinated until everyone in the country does.

Additionally, the quick vaccine drive could subtly ramp up pressure on India to provide the additional doses that will be necessary for roughly 12 weeks, when virtually every adult in Bhutan will be due for their second shot.

## United Airlines Is Planning To Use Jet Fuel Made From Trash

United Airlines said that it has partnered with firms worldwide, including Siemens AG and Nike Inc, in an 'Eco-Skies Alliance' to finance the use of about 3.4 million gallons of sustainable aviation fuel that is low in carbon derived from the trash. United Airlines has named 11 of more than a dozen global partners for the plan but did not disclose the cost or how much each partner would contribute to the cause.

Though minuscule compared with the 4.3 billion gallons of jet fuel that United consumed in 2019 before the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the amount tripled the roughly 1 million gallons of sustainable fuel that the company has used each year since 2016.

Airlines have used sustainable fuel since 2008 as part of their efforts to



reduce carbon emissions, but this represents barely 1% of the fuel used worldwide, industry experts said. Air transport accounts for a total of 2%-3% of greenhouse gas emissions, the French aerospace association said on Tuesday, 13th April. Environmental groups argue that the sector's overall contribution is higher than the estimated figure.

## Nasa's Mars Helicopter Marks A Historic Moment With The First Flight On Red Planet

NASA's miniature robot helicopter Ingenuity performed a successful takeoff and landing on Mars early on Monday, 19th achieving the first powered, controlled flight by an aircraft over the surface of another planet, the U.S. space agency said.

The solar-powered helicopter's debut on Mars marked a 21st-century Wright Brothers moment for NASA that said success could pave the way for newer modes of exploration on the red planet and other destinations in the vast solar system, such as Saturn's moon Titan and Venus.

Mission managers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) near Los Angeles burst into applause and cheers



as engineering data beamed back from Mars confirmed that the 4-pound (1.8-kg) twin-rotor helicopter had performed its maiden 40-second flight as planned about three hours earlier.

## European Soccer Group Proposes Radical Breakaway League



The world's richest soccer clubs have formed a group, including Real Madrid and Manchester United, have announced plans for a European breakaway league that would commence in August, a project that could be the bearer of the sport's most significant shakeup in years and make elite teams generate more wealth.

According to a statement early Monday, 19th April, the marquee names -- three from Italy, six from England, and three from Spain have signed up till now and would play each other midweek as an alternative to the prestigious UEFA Champions League. In addition to 15 permanent teams, another five will also qualify each year for the Super League.

The establishment of a new elite tournament in Europe would effectively end the Champions League's decades-long title as the world's premier club contest and revolutionize the sport's structure.

## Nuclear Superyacht To Offer Eco-Tours Worth \$3 Million



A nuclear-powered yacht full of activists, scientists and billionaires, are sailing the world and examining our oceans. That's entrepreneur Aaron Olivera's dream; he believes the novel vessel will help raise environmental awareness and help us move in the right direction.

The ship is called the Earth 300. It was designed by Ivan Salas Jefferson, a superyacht specialist. It is almost 60 meters high and 300 meters long, and it will be able to accommodate 425 people. Most of those will be students,

staff and scientists travelling at no cost. Several wealthy tourists, housed in luxury suites, will pay \$3 million each for a 10-day journey to help make the venture profitable.

"We wanted the sphere to inspire whoever looks at it to save the planet," Olivera said, in a restaurant that was once the ticket hall for ferries to Singapore's outer islands. "Imagine if we could build an object that would galvanize people around the planet." He calls the ship "The Eiffel Tower of our generation."

## Robert Downey Jr. Invests In Plant-Based Bacon Made From Fungus

Atlast Food Co., a plant-based protein startup, has raised a whopping \$40 million from investors, including 40 North and Downey Jr.'s Footprint Coalition Ventures and Viking Global Investors LP. The funds will help build the world's largest farm of aerial mycelium, a mushroom root that's the key ingredient in Atlast's products.

The company is one of several startups that is perfecting plant-based meat alternatives that mimic the texture and flavour of so-called whole cuts, such as steaks and bacon rashers. Replicating the caramelized sear and tender, juicy centre of such amounts will be one of the toughest challenges for alternative protein producers seeking to tap a market projected to reach \$290 billion by 2035.

"We're trying to get the people who are



not going to go full vegetarian to choose this over bacon," Eben Bayer, Atlast's Chief Executive Officer, said in an interview. "You can't just be better for the planet. The Atlast MyEats looks like bacon, it fries like bacon, it crisps up like bacon, it crunches in your mouth like bacon and we think it tastes a lot like bacon."



## New Zealand Proposes Banning Smoking For People Born After 2004



New Zealand has announced proposals aimed at curbing smoking for the next generation and helping the country move closer to its goal to be smoke-free by 2025.

The plans include to gradually increase the legal smoking age, which could extend to a ban on the sale of tobacco products and cigarettes to anyone born after the year 2004, making smoking illegal for that generation.

The committee is also considering a significant reduction in the level of nicotine allowed in all tobacco products, setting a minimum price for tobacco, prohibiting filters and restricting the locations to a minimum where tobacco and cigarettes can be sold.

“We need a new approach,” Associate Health Minister Dr Ayesha Verrall said on Thursday, April 15th, announcing the changes. “About 4,500 New Zealanders die every year from tobacco, and we need to make accelerated progress to be able to reach that goal [of Smokefree 2025]. Business-as-usual without a tobacco control program won’t get us there.”

## Crayola Has Released ‘Racially Inclusive’ Crayons, Pencils And Markers



Crayola has introduced a new line of ‘racially inclusive’ crayons, pencils and markers. The line is in collaboration with Victor Casale, former chief chemist of MAC Cosmetics and Mob Beauty founder and CEO. The packs are called Colours of the World and will have up to 40 shades and include 72 drawing implements a vast range of skin tones. The latest colours were given unique names such as Medium Deep Rose, Light Golden and Deep Almond. The 24-pack multicultural crayons,

matching colouring books and pencils are in Australian stores now, and the markers will hit shelves in June. The company said that these realistic colour names would “help kids easily find the shade they identify as their own”.

“With the world growing more diverse than ever before, Crayola hopes our new Colours of the World crayons will increase representation and foster a greater sense of belonging and acceptance,” Crayola CEO Rich Wuerthele said.

## The Campaign, ‘Right To Disconnect’ Gained Traction



There are calls for employees in the United Kingdom to be given the ‘right to disconnect’ from work, as the boundary between business and pleasure is currently blurred.

With remote working becoming the norm during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union Prospect is calling on the government to use the forthcoming Employment Bill to give employees the right to switch off when they want to. They want firms to be legally required to negotiate with staff about when they can and cannot be contacted for work purposes that would greatly benefit the employee’s work-life balance.

Andrew Pakes, Prospect Research Director, said, “Including a right to disconnect in the Employment Bill would be a big step in redrawing the blurred boundary between home and work.”

## A Trial Has Raised Hope For Game-Changing Brain Cancer Drug



A clinical trial has revealed that an experimental drug could offer ‘game-changing treatment’ for patients with aggressive brain cancers. Two out of ten patients who received the new precision drug, ipatasertib, in conjunction with the immunotherapy agent atezolizumab, observed that their cancer cells had stopped growing.

One of the patient’s tumour appeared to have disappeared completely. The Institute of Cancer Research, which led the research, said it was unusual to see positive responses so early in a trial.

Lead researcher Dr Juanita Lopez said: “We believe that our findings open the door to the further development of what could become a game-changing treatment option for some patients with aggressive glioblastoma brain cancer. Patients with glioblastoma have very poor survival rates... so any advance in outcomes would be extremely welcome.”

## A 400% Hike Makes Dogecoin Bigger Than Even Ford And Kraft

For a cryptocurrency created as a joke, Dogecoin now has some serious company. According to data provider CoinMarketCap.com, after a 400% rally in the past week, the total value of all circulating Dogecoins in the world is about \$50 billion.

## Netflix Has Committed To Net-Zero Emissions By 2022



The company has pledged to become net zero by the end of 2022. The streaming giant says it will ‘reduce, retain and remove’ carbon through measures such as installing solar panels, using LED lighting and electric vehicles on set and hiring a local crew to avoid long-haul travel.

Any emissions it cannot cut internally, it says, will be offset through conservation projects that they will fund. Carbon

offsetting schemes, however, are very controversial; critics claim they are a poor substitute for eliminating emissions.

Although late to the party (many tech companies have already set targets), Netflix has made more ambitious claims than most. “We fully anticipate that we’ll be able to hit this target despite it looming on the horizon,” said the company’s first appointed sustainability officer, Emma Stewart.

## New Zealand Has Introduced A Climate Impact Law

New Zealand has become the only country in the world to introduce a law that requires insurance companies, banks, and investment managers to report the climate impact of their business.

The legislation comes amid growing concerns for New Zealand to surmise with its CO2-belching agriculture industry. A report was released recently that found that industrial

farming accounted for nearly half of the country’s emissions.

“This law will bring climate risks and resilience into the heart of financial and business decision-making,” said James Shaw, Climate Change Minister. “We simply cannot get to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 unless the financial sector knows what impact their investments are having on the climate.”



# The Man Of Many Firsts

Leo Varadkar is Ireland's youngest, openly gay and ethnic minority former Prime Minister. He's manoeuvred Ireland to become Europe's fastest-growing economy and stared Brexit bravely in the face to get a good deal. He's a down-to-earth leader who surprises and delights.

*Written by Justin Roberts*



Image Credit: [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

His father, a doctor from Mumbai, met his mother, an Irish nurse while working in Slough in Berkshire. The family settled in Dublin in the 1970s. Ireland was very different back then; until the 1990s, divorce and homosexuality were illegal and considered taboo. The country had few immigrants, and the Republic of Ireland was one of the poorer members of the EU.

Varadkar, at the tender age of 7, announced that he wanted to become a Health Minister and since then followed through with his plan. He enrolled at the Trinity College Dublin to study medicine like his father while mapping his path to become the Health Minister.

In college, he followed through with his plan of action and was an active member of the Young Fine Gael organization. He was also the Vice President of the European People's Party's youth organization, a mixture of right and centre youth political groups spanning across Europe. In 1999, while still a medical student, at the age of 20, Varadkar stood for his first election for public office but unfortunately lost badly in a run for local government.

Before he could become a Taoiseach, he was the unofficial soft drinks boy in Fine Gael, tasked with stocking up on fizzy drinks for important meetings, a task that he diligently undertook. In October 2003, however, he was 'co-

"I didn't just wake up one day and decide 'Wouldn't it be great to become leader of Fine Gael?' It was something that was always a possibility from the time I became Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Except we never knew if and when, under what scenario, it would arise."

opted,' appointed as a replacement into the Fingal County Council. He soon stood for a council seat that represented Castleknock and established himself as a brilliant prospect for Fine Gael's party by amassing more than 4,800 votes, the biggest total for anyone running in the local election in the country that year. In 2007, at age 28, Varadkar emerged on the national stage by winning an election to the Dáil representing Dublin West.

Fine Gael came to power at the head of a coalition in 2011; Varadkar moved up the ranks and headed several portfolios, including transport, tourism and sport. He said, "I didn't just wake up one day and decide 'Wouldn't it be great to become leader of Fine Gael?' It was something that was always a possibility from the time I became Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Except we never knew if and when, under what scenario, it would arise." He eventually achieved his life long dream and was named the Health Minister of the country shortly after.

Varadkar struggled to come to terms with his sexuality. In his 20s, he did not show any interest in having a relationship, as he solely concentrated on his career and politics. In an interview, he revealed that he once considered marrying a woman instead of admitting his sexual orientation.

However, that changed in the months leading up to Ireland's marriage equality referendum; he decided it was time to come out and encourage other people to do so as well. He first came out to his family and close friends and then held discussions with his inner circle about coming out publicly as a high-profile figure in Ireland.

He came out as gay in an interview with the Irish national broadcaster, RTÉ, in 2015. He said: "I am a gay man, it's not a secret, but not something that everyone would necessarily know but isn't something I've spoken publicly about before," he told Miriam O'Callaghan on RTÉ Radio 1. The country voted in a referendum to legalize same-sex marriage a few months later, which was a big step for the country. Varadkar spoke about the breakthrough and said, "Something has been awakened in the Irish people, it was not just a

referendum it was more like a social revolution."

Varadkar recalled his parent's response, "My dad was absolutely fine, my mum, less so because she was worried I would be beaten up and she worried it would be the end of my political career."

After coming out about his sexuality, he started dating Dr Matthew Barrett, based in Chicago. The pair are both interested in keeping fit and go on regular runs and hikes together. Varadkar has also previously said that this is his first serious relationship.

On June 14, 2017, his nomination was approved in the Dáil by a vote of 57 to 50. At the age of 38, Varadkar became the youngest taoiseach in the country's history and its first openly gay minister and the first to be a member of an ethnic minority due to his father's background. During his tenure, he oversaw a particularly robust economy marked by GDP growth of more than 8 per cent in both 2017 and 2018, along with the expansion of about 4 per cent in 2019.

After becoming the Prime Minister, Varadkar opened up about his struggles as an immigrant kid; he said, "Growing up in Ireland in the 80's, multicultural families were rare. I was the guy with the dark skin and a funny name. I don't think I was ever subject to any kind of racial violence or anything like that, there is 'an othering'. I really want to make sure any kid of colour growing up in Ireland, that there's no limit to their ambitions."

Varadkar has a charming personality with witty responses; for instance, during a coronavirus briefing, he said, "Some have asked whether there is a limit to what we can achieve. My answer is that the limit does not exist." Half of that quote is taken from Tina Fey's hit comedy, Mean Girls. He added a touch of fun and laughter during a morbid crisis to calm his people.

In conclusion, when asked to define himself, Varadkar said, "It's not something that defines me. I'm not a half-Indian politician, or a doctor politician or a gay politician for that matter. It's just part of who I am, it doesn't define me, it is part of my character I suppose."



# The Women Workforce And Covid-19

- Alexis Miller .....



**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has created permanently destroyed industries across the world. Even after a year, the pandemic has left a damaged and distinctive mark on the women workforce. Gender equity has scaled back to decades ago, and an estimated \$64.5 billion per year is expected to be lost in wages and economic activity from working women. 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.

## Why have women been affected severely?

Women are usually forced to undertake greater household and caretaking responsibilities even during pre-covid times. With work from home models and a collapsing child care sector, mothers are leaving the labour force or reducing their working hours drastically. Data has proved that women in the formal economy across the world are dropping out due to extreme stress and burnout caused by work from home.

LinkedIn's Workforce Confidence Index-Wave 10 report stated, "More than 46 per cent of working mothers report working till late to make up for work, and 42 per cent are unable to focus on work with their children at home." Every one in three working mothers reported providing childcare full-time, compared with nearly one in five working fathers.

## Is there any evidence of working women being affected?

Data has proved that the number of women working in the formal economy across the world is plummeting due to burnouts caused by work from home. This has led to a complete decline in mental health, motivation levels and women are discouraged to work in the future because of the insecurity and lack of social support.

In a survey conducted by Deloitte, 89% of respondents said demands on their personal time and daily routine have changed due to the pandemic, with 92% of that group indicating that these shifts have had a negative impact. Additionally, the number of women who say they are responsible for the majority of caregiving responsibilities (e.g. childcare or care of other family members) has nearly tripled to 48% during the pandemic compared to their caring responsibilities prior to COVID-19.

Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement show that Hispanic women—of any race—and Black women are far more likely than white and Asian women to be single heads of households and, therefore, the main source of support for their family. These further skyrocketing responsibilities are destroying opportunities available to women in the workforce.

## What does the future hold?

The World Economic predicted that it will take an average of 135.6 years

to reach parity between women and men on economic opportunity, political power, education and health after the destructive effect of the pandemic.

However, there is a prominent glimmer of hope. Employers and businesses are uniting to support women and honour them in these difficult times.

For example, as part of their \$1 million pledge towards tackling rising gender inequality, Secret will support over 100,000 women and their families across the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) USA network. The deodorant brand will help pay for childcare, workforce development and barrier reduction programs and services. Their campaign, called 'Secret Missions,' spans across 12 communities that continue to be impacted by the pandemic and the donation will help these communities reenter the workforce with jobs that can substantially help provide and care for their families.

Moreover, it has also launched a documentary series called 'Secret Superhero Moms,' as a tribute to resilient mothers across the nation who continue to provide for their children despite growing obstacles. The docuseries highlights stories of 3 superhero moms from YWCA who have suffered from financial hardships during the pandemic and were unable to benefit from childcare. This documentary generated a wave of awareness and helped remind women that they are inspirations across communities.

Chico's FAS, an American clothing retailer has also implemented an organizational tone of compassion in the form of numerous benefits. These benefits include an on-site daycare centre for all parents, health counsellors, virtual yoga sessions to help women manage pandemic stress and anxiety. It has also made sure that women have the same access to promotions, with more than half of internal promotions being granted to women.

Conclusively, while some businesses are extending support towards struggling working women, there is a capacity for countless more to offer assistance and reverse the devastating effect of COVID-19 on its employees and community.

# The Fight Against COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation

- Sherlyn Gomes .....



misleading news, videos and images. Like the virus, it is growing exponentially and is highly contagious and complicates COVID-19 pandemic response efforts.

"Infodemics have already happened in one way or another in past epidemics, but what's happening right now is something of a global scale, where people are connected through different means and share information more quickly," Tim Nguyen, Head of Information Network for Epidemics said. "This has created a new situation where we are rethinking and reshaping our approach to managing infodemics in emergencies."

## How social media sites are tackling the issue

Twitter set up new guidelines to deal with this ongoing crisis in March 2021. Users who would repeatedly spread and share false information about COVID-19 vaccines would have their accounts suspended or shut down for a while.

The battle is also being fought in computer science and sociology labs across the United States. Scientists have been called in who tracked the spread of false information on social media honed their skills last year during the US Presidential elections. They have not shifted their focus on false claims made with regards to the COVID-19 vaccines. Statistics reveal that more than one-fifth of people in the United States are opposed to receiving a vaccine.

While Google is fiercely tackling the issue in India and is working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to increase the science-based narrative of the vaccination drive in the country, Google said it has been working closely with the Rapid Risk Response team at the MoHFW that is tracking misinformation using social media tools across regions and languages.

In its blog post, Google detailed the Knowledge Panels that appear in the Google Search for queries related to the COVID vaccine. These panels provide consolidated information such as details

on the two vaccines, effectiveness, safety, distribution, side effects, and more.

On YouTube, Google has launched information panels that show up when COVID-related queries are searched for and has a banner on the YouTube homepage, both of which redirect to essential vaccine resources on the MoHFW website.

## What can we do?

As false information about the vaccines keeps brewing, we can do our part to raise awareness that such claims exist and encourage everyone to be cautious in evaluating allegations against the vaccine.

Some sources are simply unreliable. For example, anti-vaccine organizations have an agenda to spread misinformation. Be cautious while reading information from such sites and always fact check if the information is accurate.

Be careful when reading anonymous messages on social media sites with unverified claims. Recently, in a viral video, a nurse named Khalilah Mitchell based in Tennessee claimed that after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, she was diagnosed with Bell's Palsy. But after checking through the database, it was revealed that there is no such nurse anywhere in the United States.

## In Conclusion:

As Anthony Fauci, American Physician-Scientist and Immunologist, said, "It's almost paradoxical that they don't want to get vaccinated. So that's the thing that we've got to work on. We can't be pejorative to them. We've got to try and convince them why it's so important to get to where they want to be and where I want to be and where all public health officials want to be, would be to get vaccinated." He concluded that the only way out of the pandemic is by getting everyone vaccinated.



# Innovating To Solve Global Challenges

Written by Sherlyn Gomes

Image Credit: Founder Institute

Dr Peter Diamandis is avant-garde in the fields of innovation, commercial space, and sustainability. He is best known for being the founder of XPRIZE Foundation that uses competitions to innovate new technologies and solutions initiatives that address the biggest challenges we face today.

As a kid, Diamandis was mesmerized by space and was first inspired by the Apollo 11 moonwalk, which was a great feat achieved by humans as a species. While Diamandis aspired to become an astronaut, his parents pushed him to do medicine to take over his father's ob/GYN clinic. "So I said, 'Okay, I'll try to do both,'" Diamandis recalled.

Simultaneously he experimented with different types of rockets. "I had pounds and pounds of potassium chloride and magnesium, and I blew up a variety of things. You used to be able to mail-order all of this stuff. If I did anything close to what I did back then I would be flagged as a terrorist," he said. As a kid with a creative imagination equipped with

D.I.Y. skills, he and his friend created many successful devices, some of which unfortunately blew up in their face.

When Diamandis started attending M.I.T., he was simultaneously also studying pre-med while keeping up with his passion project, a space group he co-founded. The Space Group named, 'The Students for the Exploration & Development of Space' now has more than 35 chapters on various campuses. "I learned how to manage people and raise money," Diamandis says. "When I got my first \$5,000 donation it felt like a million-dollar check."

Diamandis was a brilliant premed student and won many accolades for his undergraduate research and secured his

admission to Harvard Medical School. However, with just a year left to complete his graduation, he went back to M.I.T. to receive his degree in aeronautics and astronautics, then returned to Harvard to finish his M.D.

He founded International Microspace in 1988 with \$2.5 million in private funds. He finally won a contract with the 'Star Wars' program funded by the Government. However, despite all his efforts, his project failed. But that did not dampen his spirits, Diamandis started researching new projects he could head.

In late 1993 Diamandis studied awards by 19th-and early-20th-century explorers and adventurers, notably the \$25,000 Orteig Prize, which was a reward offered

to the first Allied aviators to fly non-stop from New York City to Paris or vice versa that had never been done before at the time. It got him thinking how prizes, competition, greed, teamwork, bold and clear goals, and high visibility could produce innovative—and highly creative—approaches to problems.

"I called it the X Prize," says Diamandis. "X stood for the name of the benefactor," who was non-existent for a long time since it took him six years to find a backer. "Everyone kept saying no," Diamandis recalls. Until he met telecom entrepreneur Anousheh Ansari, who told a reporter in 2002 that she wanted a jaunt in space, Diamandis saw his opportunity and pounced; he arranged a meeting with Ansari, her husband, Hamid,

and his brother Amir. "As soon as he said, 'reusable flight, suborbital,' we just looked at each other," recalled Amir. Two years later, a craft by Microsoft Co-Founder Paul Allen and aerospace designer Burt Rutan made two trips into space in 14 days and captured the prize. And the X Prize was finally launched.

The goal at X Prize is to identify the world's biggest challenges and create competitions that inspire brilliant minds across the globe to make technological breakthroughs and help solve them. The X Prize Foundation is a mini-industry with about 50 employees. They hold competitions in education, global development, energy and the environment, life sciences and space and undersea exploration. Diamandis says, "The world's biggest problems are the world's biggest market opportunities. And that's a huge thing. Solve hunger, literacy and energy problems, get the gratitude of the world and become a billionaire in the process."

The ocean's declining health is one of the biggest market failures. We live in the day and age where climate change is a growing crisis, yet we give little to no thought to damaging the ecosystem surrounding us, and that is a pain point that X Prize is working to solve.

In the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, Diamandis quickly responded by setting up the Wendy Schmidt Oil Cleanup X CHALLENGE, a \$1.4-million competition to fasten the pace of cleaning up the oil on the surface. Just fourteen months after the dreaded incident, the winner demonstrated a device that achieved a cleanup rate almost four times faster than the industry's previous best recovery rate.

Diamandis is an optimist and speaking on technology he says, "Every powerful technology that we've ever created is used for good and for bad. But look at the data over the long term — how the cost of food production per person has plummeted, how longevity has increased. I'm not saying there aren't going to be challenges, but on the whole, technology is making the world a better place and will continue to. For me, it's about uplifting those billions of people who have been in fundamental survival mode."

The ocean's declining health is one of the biggest market failures. We live in the day and age where climate change is a growing crisis, yet we give little to no thought to damaging the ecosystem surrounding us, and that is a pain point that X Prize is working to solve.



# At The Helm Of The World Of Fashion Magazines

In the dazzling and glamorous world of fashion magazines, Radhika Jones made a remarkable debut. After getting the Editor-In-Chief position in 2017 at Harper's Bazaar, she moved the magazine away from glamorous stylized covers and featured celebrities in regular clothes instead of couture and ball gowns. Jones has moved the online content and magazine to represent all backgrounds and lifestyles and highlight the cultural zeitgeist. Her approach resonates with readers. In 2020, the magazine broke its record for new monthly subscriptions, a staggering feat in the changing world of media.

*Written by Kyle Goldberg*

Radhika Jones' father, Robert L. Jones was a guitarist and vocalist who pursued a career in the world of folk music in Boston and Cambridge. He eloped with her mother, Marguerite who hails from India. Growing up, Jones' father's 'love of discovery' created a powerful example for Radhika and her siblings. "A lot of the work of a festival-producer is discovering new talent. That was something that I watched him do over and over," Jones recalled. She learned early in life to "find something that you love, and then sort of figure out how to go from there."

Jones studied at Harvard because she felt a familial attachment to Boston, where her father had grown and begun his career. After Harvard, Jones did not have a concrete plan for her career. She moved to Taipei and taught English, and later shifted to Moscow in 1995. She had previously dated Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's son Yermolai Solzhenitsyn in college that captivated her to the country and led her to accept a job at

The Moscow Times as a Copyeditor. "It was an amazing time in the history of the world," she recalled of her two years there. "We worked in the old Pravda building," the former paper of the Soviet Communist Party.

She loved the city of Moscow, but after three long years abroad, she wanted to go back home. "I felt also that I just wasn't done with my field," she explained. She went back and enrolled for an English and Comparative Literature PhD at Columbia in 1997, with interests in Postcolonial Literature and the Victorian Novel.

After working several jobs, Jones was eventually named Deputy Managing Editor at Time. Jones edited the magazine's 'Time 100' and 'Person of the Year.' Jones said, "Time 100 Lists get a bad rap. They can be very gimmicky. But they are also an index of cultural change. You kind of see who, at any given moment, was getting our attention," she added. "You can chart out when technology and Silicon Valley

started to overtake Wall Street in terms of influence...You see the rise of the Tea Party, you see the rise of a different kind of charisma in politics."

Jones started working at The New York Times, and just a year later, Graydon Carter announced his retirement from Vanity Fair. New Yorker Editor David Remnick had been searching for candidates to fill the role, he recounted, and "Radhika's name came up often as someone who had real journalistic chops and as someone of enormous integrity." He asked Jones if she would consider trying out for the job.

What intrigued her about the opportunity was her memory of Editor Tina Brown reviving the magazine in 1983 after having gone unpublished for nearly 50 years. "Those covers were iconic," Jones declared. "They were the kinds of covers that, when you make a magazine, you dream about making. They started conversations. They provoked people. I firmly believe that the Demi Moore cover changed the way we think about

motherhood and celebrity," she said, referring to the 1991 image in which the actress appears naked—and blissfully pregnant. "It hadn't had quite that energy in a little while, and I wondered if it would be possible to bring that back."

She tried to recapture that energy for present-day America and has rethought personalities who deserve to be talked about, looked at, or admired in the magazine's pages. "The way that we think and talk about privilege, now in 2020, is very different from the way we would have talked about it 10 or 20 years ago, and I want the magazine to reflect that," she said. "What's been great about it is that we have really found our place. Our audience now is bigger than it was three years ago. It's younger. It's more diverse. It's also more affluent. All of those things go together in ways that are really interesting."

When she started working on the September issue in 2020, she knew that it couldn't be a regular Vanity Fair magazine in light of both the pandemic and the summer-long racial-justice uprisings. In the magazine world, she explains that September is a 'curtain raiser' for culture: it's when new exhibitions and plays open, and the fashion industry promotes its contemporary lines. "Usually our pages would be full of people in the culture who have new projects that are opening or debuting on TV, on movie screens, in theatres and museums."

The September issue was named 'The Great Fire,' by Guest Editor Coates that focused on the famous Black Lives Matter campaign, with a cover portraying Breonna Taylor striking a confident pose in a graceful, airy blue gown. Coates's despairing feature narrated Taylor's life from her mother's perspective, Tamika Palmer. It was written and adapted directly from interviews with Palmer; it was, as Jones put it, Breonna Taylor's story "as only a mother could tell it."

It was something that Jones was working towards during her three years at the helm of Vanity Fair. And she was euphoric when the issue came out, it made sense to her readers, and they understood the plight of the people of colour in the country. "They understood the project...and that matters a lot to me," she says. "It started to feel like the whole culture was waking up to something. That was the curtain-raiser that we wanted to capture."

Jones revealed her thoughts on what her ultimate goal in life is, she said "I'm not an easily satisfied person. I don't know what it is that would make me feel that way. I think eventually I'd like to write a book. I don't know what that would be about. There are more things I need to read in my life. I want to be able to carve out space to read and write again. But I don't really have a checklist, per se. I just want to keep growing as an editor and as a leader, and I want our work to keep striking the chord that it's been striking."

*Image Credit: WWD*



# How Brands Can Spread Positivity Through Marketing

- Brianna Da Cruz .....



A positive distraction from the ongoing global crisis has become vital as despair and gloom dominate optimism. In these tragic times, customers are desperate for a dose of positivity to brighten their days and lift their spirits. Positive marketing and brand empathy have taken over the marketing world to captivate and support consumers. The combination acts as an exceptional approach to marketing with the ultimate focus of achieving social good and wellbeing.

## Do consumers connect more with positive marketing approaches?

Customers have been actively preferring businesses that work towards positive social change and support their customers and community during times of turmoil.

65% of consumers will not buy from a brand if it stays silent on an issue that the customers care about, according to an Edelman report. Moreover, YouGov, a global market research and data company, conducted a report that indicated that the majority of consumers in both the UK and the US believe that it is important for brands to get involved in social issues. 58% of consumers further indicated that the reason for this belief was that

they wanted to interact with socially responsible brands that they could trust.

## How have businesses adapted to positive marketing?

From small businesses to large, positive marketing has recently captured hearts across the world. We highlight some of the most cherished marketing campaigns and categories below.

**Disability Awareness:** On the World Down Syndrome Day, CoorDown (the Italian Down Syndrome organization) and LinkedIn partnered with Small Illustrates to portray a chain reaction that starts from hiring a young woman with down syndrome at a bakery. The heart-rendering ad film was made to motivate organizations to use the Hiring Chain website and raise awareness about down syndrome. The website allows businesses to connect with talented individuals with down syndrome and build a culture of inclusion. Small Illustrates also collaborated with Sting for the playback music to increase the reach of the campaign.

**Sustainability:** Dove decided to launch refillable deodorant packages to be more environmentally friendly and sustainable. Disposable tubes and caps from deodorant contribute to significant

plastic gathering in landfills. To tackle this, Dove announced a new line of deodorants, made with a stainless steel case. Dove has guaranteed that the reusable case will stand the test of time. However, if the case faces damage, Dove will replace it free of charge. Dove's mission to help reduce global waste proved to inspire other brands to step towards sustainability and end 'disposable' culture.

**Pandemic Relief:** Coca Cola captivated viewers in collaboration with Dentsu for the campaign 'To The Human Race.' The ad was a fresh dose of optimism and energy as it paid tribute to everyone across the world for staying strong through the pandemic. Advertising a 'vaccine of positivity,' the film encouraged the world to stay strong, positive and kind. The brand also launched a series called 'Unsung Heroes' which features inspirational workers at Coca-Cola across the world and their hard work.

**Health and fitness:** Doc Morris's heartwarming Christmas advert captured millions across the world. The moving ad featured an old man training for weeks secretly by trying to lift a kettlebell. He came across obstacles, side-glances from neighbours and motivated himself by looking at an unseen photo. On Christmas, the man visits his granddaughter and gifts her a remarkable star for their Christmas tree. The reason for his unwavering dedication is revealed as he lifts his granddaughter so that she can place the star on the tree. The soul-stirring ad, accompanied with the tagline of 'So that you can take care of what really matters in life,' left viewers emotional across social media.

## In Conclusion:

Positive marketing has become crucial for every business to adopt. In a world of uncertainty and adversity, your brand can become the beacon of hope and positivity that consumers are desperate for.

# How To Lead Teams You Haven't Met In Person Successfully

- Justin Roberts .....



Working from home is a drastic shift from walking into the office every day and engaging with peers. However, this new normal is here to stay. Many who have joined new companies and taken on new roles since the advent of remote working are still grappling with the processes of managing teams without connecting with them the way we would if we were to meet them in person.

How do we work on this problem to get the best possible outcome while mentoring teams remotely? Here are a few simple steps that you can inculcate in your daily meetings and routines that will help you form a better bond with your team members.

## 1. Begin with virtual introductions

This is a significant first step for people who have just recently joined a new company. Use this time to listen, learn and introduce yourself in various settings with everyone at your organization. Try limiting group meetings to six or seven people that will help you better understand the employees and gain their perspectives on various subjects.

People tend to rely on their charming personalities to make a good first impression; however, via virtual calls, it is difficult for that to come through; an excellent skill to rely on during virtual

meetings is good observational skills. Casey, CFO at WalkMe, believes in having those 'unstructured conversations' with his colleagues to find out how they are doing to draw a level of trust that has served him well.

## 2. Get organized

Prioritize and focus on the most important task for team members, even with the many distractions while working remotely. Give team members a 2-3 week goal that can be mutually agreed upon. List down several tasks that could be as simple as:

- Come up with a new concept for social media
- Find new ways to increase traffic to the site
- Suggest improvements to the old processes
- Implement the changes discussed

Over time, team members may face certain roadblocks due to time zone challenges, distractions at home, and delays. It would help if you observed how they manage these issues and execute their tasks by the end of the trial period.

Based on the results from the criteria above, it will better help to assess the candidates and give them feedback to put them on the right path.

## 3. Review progress regularly

Schedule meetings regularly to check the progress. These check-ins are vital so that progress does not falter and any issues can be resolved immediately. For longer projects, review the relevant milestones as every day would not be practical. Apps like Trello are great for this and work meticulously.

The app tracks progress on the board for each task and is visible to every team member. After a task is completed, it can be shifted to the completed section for everyone to know, while new tasks can be added.

## 4. Let go of formality but emphasize accountability

Being flexible is key to embracing new working realities, especially when some employees are looking after their children who are homeschooling or tending to their family that have tested positive for COVID-19. How we deal with this today will be the foundation of our work models in the future.

However, informality should not lead to a lack of accountability. Accountability is and always will be the cornerstone of shared success — between clients, colleagues and employees. If we can hold ourselves accountable, it will help us achieve a culture of accountability, contributing to better results.

As Courtney Lynch, Founding Partner at Lead Star, said, "Leaders inspire accountability through their ability to accept responsibility before they place blame."

## In Conclusion:

We are shaping the future models of working, and we must implement good strategies that will benefit all the stakeholders in the process. As John C. Maxwell, Leadership Speaker, said, "To collaborative team members, completing one another is more important than competing with one another."



# The Man Who Moved Mountains



Image Credit: SB Nation

Sean Swarner is the only person in the world to endure two life-threatening cancer types. After defeating the dreaded disease, he climbed all seven summits and skied to the North & South pole with just one lung. He is now a famous philanthropist, keynote speaker, author and was also voted as one of the top 8 most inspirational people in history.

*Written by Alexis Miller*

**B**orn in Ohio, Sean was a completely healthy child. At 13, his entire body unnaturally swelled up after a minute basketball injury. After agonising visits to the doctor, he was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma and was given only three months to live. While Sean was too young to understand death, he knew that he had to fight it. After a year of chemotherapy and unwavering courage, he was cancer-free.

However, two years later, he was diagnosed with critical Askin's sarcoma. Due to the severity, his golf ball-sized tumour was removed on the same day, but Sean was given a prognosis of 14 days to live with a 6 percent chance of survival. He had also been in a medically-induced coma on and off for a year. Sean said that he would have been more likely to win the lottery four or five times with the same numbers than to have survived both these terminal cancers.

Filled with a profound respect for life, he was committed to doing something incredible. He set out to climb Mount Everest. He dropped out of graduate school to truly focus on achieving his extraordinary goal. Sean would climb

Long's Peak every week with 100 pounds of rocks in his backpack. He struggled to find sponsors and his parents disagreed with his plan. After selling everything he had and begging for cash, he was selected as a finalist for the Johnnie Walker Keep Walking Campaign in New York City. Just before he pitched his project, the twin towers were attacked. He again stared death in the eyes and realised his mortality. The pot was split between all the finalists and Sean finally had enough funds to achieve his dream. However, no guide company wanted to support Sean as a client. He was constantly rejected and was told that it was "physiologically impossible" for him to get above 21,000 feet. He finally secured an Everest organiser after convincing the American Alpine Club that he was qualified. He bought a slot on National Geographic's permit and set to conquer Everest with only one cook, two Sherpa and his brother. Over two months later, he achieved the seemingly impossible.

hen asked about how he pushed through the apparently insurmountable obstacles he said, "Every night I went to bed [and] visualized myself reaching the summit, and I attached all of my feelings to that. If you don't have an emotional attachment to something then what's to drive you when things get tough? If you don't believe something is possible, then it's not."

After he made it back down, he started the Cancer Climber Association, a non-profit to inspire others. The foundation promotes cancer awareness and funds 100% of a survivor's trip to Africa. Sean travels annually to Africa and has climbed up Mount Kilimanjaro at least 13 times. He became the first cancer survivor to climb the rest of the Seven Summits alongside working on his non-profit. While training for the summits, he decided to participate in Ford Ironman World Championship Hawaii- a challenging triathlon hosted annually. "Finishing Ironman Hawaii in 2008 was one of the hardest things I had ever done", said Sean. He completed it with an astonishing final time of 11:44:15 against the standard average of 12:35:00.

Completing Ironman gave him another push to strive and aim even higher which helped him complete Explorers Grand Slam. On his way to the North Pole, he also brought a flag with names of people

"Every night I went to bed [and] visualized myself reaching the summit, and I attached all of my feelings to that. If you don't have an emotional attachment to something then what's to drive you when things get tough? If you don't believe something is possible, then it's not."

touched by cancer and planted the flag in honour of cancer heroes. This heartfelt initiative was undertaken to spread a message of hope and motivate cancer fighters, survivors and their caregivers to overcome their own "mountains."

Sean is now a real-life superhero and role model to millions. He delivers exclusive speeches to Fortune 500 companies, NFL players and universities while running numerous leadership panels and motivational keynotes. He also signed a book series deal and has currently released 2 books: 'Keep Climbing: How I Beat Cancer and Reached the Top of the World' and 'Being Unstoppable: Conquering Your Everest.' Being as close to a real-life bionic man as possible, Sean's fascinating life story became the subject of Amazon's Emmy-nominated documentary titled 'True North: The Sean Swarner Story.' He was also the winner of the 'Don't Ever Give Up' Award presented by ESPN and the Jimmy V Foundation.

At his weakest, he told himself, "You have to redefine your impossible. You have to believe it before you see it." Sean's endurance, unwavering courage and dedication have proven that even the largest of "mountains" and obstacles can be conquered and triumphed over.



# The Youngest Self Made Billionaire – Whitney Wolfe Herd

Whitney Wolfe Herd is well-known for her bold decisions and stance, and it has reflected in her business ideas as well. She started the dating app Bumble, where women get to make the first move over conventional male-dominated dating culture. The 31-year-old also recently became the world's youngest self-made female billionaire when she took Bumble public in February 2021.

*Written by Justin Roberts*



Image Credit: Madellekangha.com

**H**erd attended college at the Southern Methodist University, where she majored in international studies and was a Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority member. While still in college, she was always passionate about helping people and decided to start a business selling bamboo tote bags to help areas affected by the oil spill of BP. She partnered with celebrity stylist Patrick Aufdenkamp and launched the non-profit organization named the 'Help Us Project.' The bags were a hit and received national press after celebrities such as Rachel Zoe and Nicole Richie were photographed. Shortly after that, she began working on a second business with Aufdenkamp called 'Tender Heart', a clothing line dedicated to raising awareness around human trafficking and fair trade. After graduating, Herd travelled to Southeast Asia, where she worked with orphanages and helped in any way that she could. Herd said, "I knew I was ambitious, I knew I was passionate, and that I wanted to change the world in some shape or form, but I had no idea what that might look like."

At age 22, Herd joined Hatch Labs. Through the company, she got involved with the startup Cardify. Sean Rad led the project through Hatch Labs IAC incubator; however, the project was later abandoned. By then, Herd has the opportunity to join the development team for the dating app Tinder with Rad and Chris Gulczynski within the IAC startup incubator in 2012.

Due to her excellent marketing skills, she soon found herself named the Vice President of Marketing for the dating app Tinder. Tinder was an instant hit not just in the US but around the globe. She was also reportedly the mastermind behind the name of the app, taking inspiration from the flame logo and the idea of Tinder, which is a combustible material used to start a fire. She was also credited with fueling its popularity on college campuses and growing its user base.

Before founding Bumble, Herd was not just the VP of Marketing but also among Tinder's founding team. However, due to tensions with other executives - especially one of whom she had been dating previously - she left the

organization. Shortly after, she filed a sexual harassment case against the company.

Match Group Inc, Tinder's parent company, denied her claims but paid around \$1m to settle the dispute. As a result of the case and her allegations, she experienced online abuse that even prompted her to delete her Twitter account.

Wolfe Herd said in an interview, "I've been in a place in my life where I've had no confidence, no self-respect, zero self-worth and it was really easy to hurt my feelings. Then when you rebuild some of that, you become stronger."

That's when Bumble was born in 2014. The misogyny of tech—is precisely why Bumble was invented. It's also why Herd designed the app so only women can send the first message when users match on the platform. In an online dating landscape where women—particularly women of colour—are routinely harassed and bullied, she set out to build the closest thing to a safe space for digital romance. "Honestly, my ambition comes from abusive relationships," Herd said. "I've never had this healthy male relationship until I created it. I engineered an ecosystem of healthy male relationships in my life."

She founded the app, Bumble with help from early investor Andrey Adreiev, a Russian billionaire who has a stake in Badoo and sold both in November 2019.

Herd currently owns an 11.6% stake in dating app, Bumble, which gives her an estimated net worth of \$1.3bn while she also heads Badoo. The two apps have a combined 40 million users, 2.4 million of whom pay a subscription.

Wolfe Herd has always been open about her mental health battles and says she is still trying to figure it out with a therapist and her favourite meditation app, Headspace. Herd feels as the CEO of Bumble, it is her responsibility to talk about these mental health challenges and influence her audience in a positive light. She said, "I do [feel a responsibility to be open]. I like being honest and I know how bad it made me feel when I was going through dark times and I would read about all these 'boss girls'

"I've been in a place in my life where I've had no confidence, no self-respect, zero self-worth and it was really easy to hurt my feelings. Then when you rebuild some of that, you become stronger."

and successful tech people. They sounded so perfect and I thought, This will never be me because I have all these problems. I think it's healthy and important [to be open and honest]. We have an audience of 22 to 23 millions users now – that's a lot of people and as the CEO, it's my responsibility to ensure that both my team and our users feel healthy and happy."

The brand of Bumble is deeply embedded in the Empowerment Industrial Complex. "I think empowerment has probably been taken advantage of, the word itself, and we're probably part of that," Wolfe Herd said. "We started saying this before Time's Up, before #MeToo—we were saying these things before our peers. Every single company right now is doing 'girl power' and 'the future is female.'" Herd knows that keeping her brand relevant means expanding her vision for the company beyond the women she imagined when launching the app. And, of course, she knows how to brand this too. In conclusion, Herd said, "I'm so happy to own our shortcomings because that's the only way we're ever going to get better."



# Build Your Personal Leadership Brand

- Kyle Goldberg

Your personality is your power. Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates are a few of the most liked personalities in the world. How do they exude confidence, empathy and kindness that makes everyone around the world look at them with awe and admiration? 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'.

Your leadership brand decides how your colleagues and employees will see you. It conveys your identity, your style and makes you a distinct leader. Having your leadership brand is imperative as it creates an image, and you have the power to make it ever-lasting and positive.

Here are five things to consider while building your leadership brand.

## 1. Understand who you are

How do you create your brand without knowing your worth? Consider yourself for a moment. What are your strong suits? Elon Musk has founded SpaceX based on his interests, even though many people disagreed with him. But he did not give in because he clearly understood what he stands for and his goals in life. Today the company has achieved several accomplishments in the field of aerospace engineering, and it's all thanks to his perseverance.

Ultimately, team members will follow leaders they like, trust, and respect. So, what are your values? Distinguish it clearly and see it through.

## 2. What do you wish to be known for

You must then explicitly know what you want to be known for, whether it's sustainability, tech or even empathy like the beloved Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern. But how did they

get these titles? By consistently working towards what they stand for and believed in. Your identity will be etched in the minds of the people you meet for a very long time. Make sure you work on how you wish to be perceived and stay loyal to your cause.

## 3. How can you make a difference?

You are a part of an organization to make a difference and to add value. Most of the leaders that do well are the ones who work towards helping and uplifting others through their work. Why are life coaches and motivational speakers like Gary Vaynerchuk and Tony Robbins gaining momentum? Because they understand that it is essential to help others succeed as well.

Identify your traits and values that will help you create a difference in an organization. Think about what impact you currently have and what kind of results you wish to deliver in the next 12 months, and who would benefit from it.

## 4. Start understanding your end-goal

The next step would be to create a solid and impactful mission statement. Create a personal statement that will help you move forward in the direction you wish to. The mission statement of Reshma Saujani, Founder Of Girls Who Code, is, 'brave, not perfect.' This simple line has helped her in countless difficult situations and gave her the courage to go forward and give it her best shot with no regrets.

Leverage your dreams into reality by integrating your values and desires. Craft a personal leadership brand that resonates with you and will enable you to take the plunge when faced with difficult situations while also creating a unique spark about you to make that difference.

## 5. Build Your Brand

The next and final step is to implement everything you have decided in your day-to-day activities. Hal Elrod, Author of



Miracle Morning is a keen believer in self-assessment and encourages everyone to do the practice to better themselves in every aspect of their life. It is key to making your personal brand come to life.

Assess yourself and ask your most trusted friends and family their opinions to see if your vision for yourself is coming to life and what areas in your life can be changed for the better.

## In Conclusion:

Leadership is not a trait you grow up with; it can be inculcated and developed and tuned to make yourself better every day. As Warren Bennis, American Author, said, "The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born—that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born."

# Stop Working Excessively And Letting Your Team Overwork Too

- Sherlyn Gomes



The pandemic has pushed many of us to work incessant hours as the line between work-life balance blurs further as we shift to remote. The recent incident when Jonny Frostick had a heart attack has started the conversation going about the toxic work culture that has come about during this pandemic.

Frolick said, "when he realized he was having a heart attack, the first thing that went through his mind was: 'F\*\*\* I needed to meet with my manager tomorrow; this isn't convenient.'" Then he thought about funding for a project, his will, and finally, his wife. The 45-year-old HSBC contractor chronicled his near-death experience on LinkedIn that has gained momentum on the subject.

According to Harvard Business School, an analysis done on the number of emails and meetings of 3.1 million people in 16 cities across the world found that the average workday increased by 8.2 per cent—or 48.5 minutes—during the pandemic's early weeks that has since dropped by a minor fraction. Employees also participated in more meetings, though for less time than they did before COVID-19.

"There is a general sense that we never

stop being in front of Zoom or interacting," said Raffaella Sadun, Professor of Business Administration in the HBS Strategy Unit. "It's very taxing, to be honest."

This is a very toxic work culture that needs to be addressed immediately. As Managers and employees, there are several ways we can work on this to obtain a good work-life balance that will keep us well-rested and also help us perform better at work without experiencing burnout every second week.

## What you could do as a Manager or Leader

As we are working in very different circumstances, we must take the time to prioritize our tasks. As leaders, we should start by checking our goals. If we do not meet those given goals or sales targets, we need to check why that did not happen; was it because the employee did not perform well? Was it because the market is currently down due to the pandemic? If it is the latter, we cannot push our team to work overtime to contact more people; instead, we need to develop better solutions to drive our business.

Another critical factor is to discuss guidelines and switch off timings for team members.

Huda Idrees, the Chief Executive Officer of Dot Health, a Toronto-based technology startup, confirmed that her 15 employees are working, on average, 12-hour days, up from 9 hours pre-pandemic. "We're at our computers very early because there's no commute time," she said. "And because no one is going out in the evenings, we're also always there."

The big problem that we face is that there is no escape. With nowhere to go and nothing to do, people feel like they have no legitimate excuse for being unavailable. This is something that needs to be touched upon. Discuss the timings your employees would like to work, if it's 9 am-6 pm then hold them to it but after 6 pm let them de-stress, cool off with a nice hot shower and have dinner with their families. As a leader, you are also in dire need of that downtime to relax and give yourself a break.

"We have been brainwashed for [hundreds of] years to believe that what gives us all our value is hard work and long hours," said Celeste Headlee, American Journalist. "When your work is just in the other room, there's a temptation to spend more time at your desk to try to 'get ahead.' But if you're not taking breaks, you're likely not going to be as sharp or productive as you could be."

## In Conclusion:

Be a model that your employees can look up to and follow. Make your expectations known to your team, and do your best to be an example of that behaviour, even if it includes turning off your visible availability on platforms like Slack to take time off that you need to lay back and relax. And most importantly, take your vacation time; you deserve it!



# The Brain Hacker Revolutionizing Personal Development

Vishen Lakhiani is a Malaysian entrepreneur, author, and motivational speaker of Indian descent. He is the founder and CEO of Mindvalley and the author of two books: *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind* and *The Buddha and the Badass*. He is revolutionizing the personal transformation sector with a focus on helping everyone reach their full potential.

*Written by Kyle Goldberg*

**L**akhiani was born and raised in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, although he has his roots back in India. He described himself as “an awkward kid with poor eyesight, bad skin and Aspergers.”

His schooling experience was below average and has played an instrumental role in shaping one of his most extensive missions to date: to evolve the education system and create a new system that enables people to become their best version. Lakhiani said, “in the Malaysian schooling system there was no space for creativity or thinking outside the box.”

Lakhiani then moved to the US to study Computer Engineering at the University of Michigan. After graduation, he was offered an internship by Microsoft, which he readily accepted but soon realized that he dreaded his job. He tried his luck working different roles, including working at a non-profit but to no avail.

Lakhiani recalled, “At 24, broke from working for a non-profit, I decided to move to Silicon Valley and try my hand at being an entrepreneur. My timing, in a word, sucked. The dot-com bubble burst soon after, and I lost everything. I was renting a couch from a college kid for \$100 a month and driving a car with faulty brakes. Finally, due to some luck, I got a job. It was a sink-or-swim job with no basic pay; I had to

earn commissions if I would eat, pay my bills, and survive.”

He was barely keeping his head above water. One night, feeling like a failure and loathing himself, he got on Google and searched for hope and chanced upon a meditation class.

As he started spending more time meditating, he unlocked a unique potential of his mind. He became the top performer at his work, and his sales figures skyrocketed. He even got promoted three times in four months, eventually becoming Director of Sales.

While dumbstruck at his success, he decided to teach his newfound wisdom and become a meditation instructor. He said, “This decision would ultimately change everything for me - and even led to me creating my form of meditation, known as the 6 Phase Meditation (which I made accessible to the world).”

In 2004, Lakhiani registered a little website to sell meditation CDs called Mindvalley. However, the company was barely successful - just a small company building websites for various authors in personal transformation. He worked on several other startups with more promise than a small meditation site in his spare time. But he never gained any fulfilment from this.

The calling of personal growth kept tugging at him, but he would not budge. “You can’t change the world

teaching personal growth, I told myself,” Lakhiani said.

Between 2010 and 2013, everything he was working on started collapsing, except his transformation ventures.

In 2010, he began A-Fest, a transformational festival. He recalled, “An investor called it ‘The stupidest idea I’ve ever heard’.”

Simultaneously he started a tech company that secured a \$2M investment from Intel Capital Ventures. Two years down the road, the tech venture was failing while A-Fest, the ‘stupid idea’ was blooming. Soon he found his ventures collapsing like pieces of dominos. But the only thing that succeeded was personal transformation ventures. So he decided to make that his focus.

From 2011 he focused his attention solely on Mindvalley and merged A-Fest with the company to organize live events. After a lot of hard work and struggle, by May 2016, he started

“I intend to do my part in bringing humanity together in this way. This is why I speak up against divisive ideas and policies in the public sphere. I make diversity an integral part of Mindvalley’s employment policy.”

seeing things take a turn for the best. He published his first book that instantly became a best-seller.

By July 2018, 200,000 students had enrolled for Mindvalley’s online courses. The company started gaining traction, and people were passionate about receiving messages every day about new classes and testimonies of lives that they had previously touched.

In a period of just two years, the company transformed and grew beyond expectation. Mindvalley became one of the leading brands in human transformation. Today, the company is aiming to create the world’s most influential education movement on the planet. And in the process, make the significant rise in consciousness our species has ever experienced.

Lakhiani’s favourite aspect about the company, he says, “has got to be the real-world events: where all of Mindvalley’s best people and wisdom come together to push ourselves and humanity forward. That, and I love costume parties.” he added with a playful smile.

In conclusion, he said, “I intend to do my part in bringing humanity together in this way. This is why I speak up against divisive ideas and policies in the public sphere. I make diversity an integral part of Mindvalley’s employment policy.” The company is truly transforming lives beyond belief, and we have Vishen Lakhiani to thank for all of it.

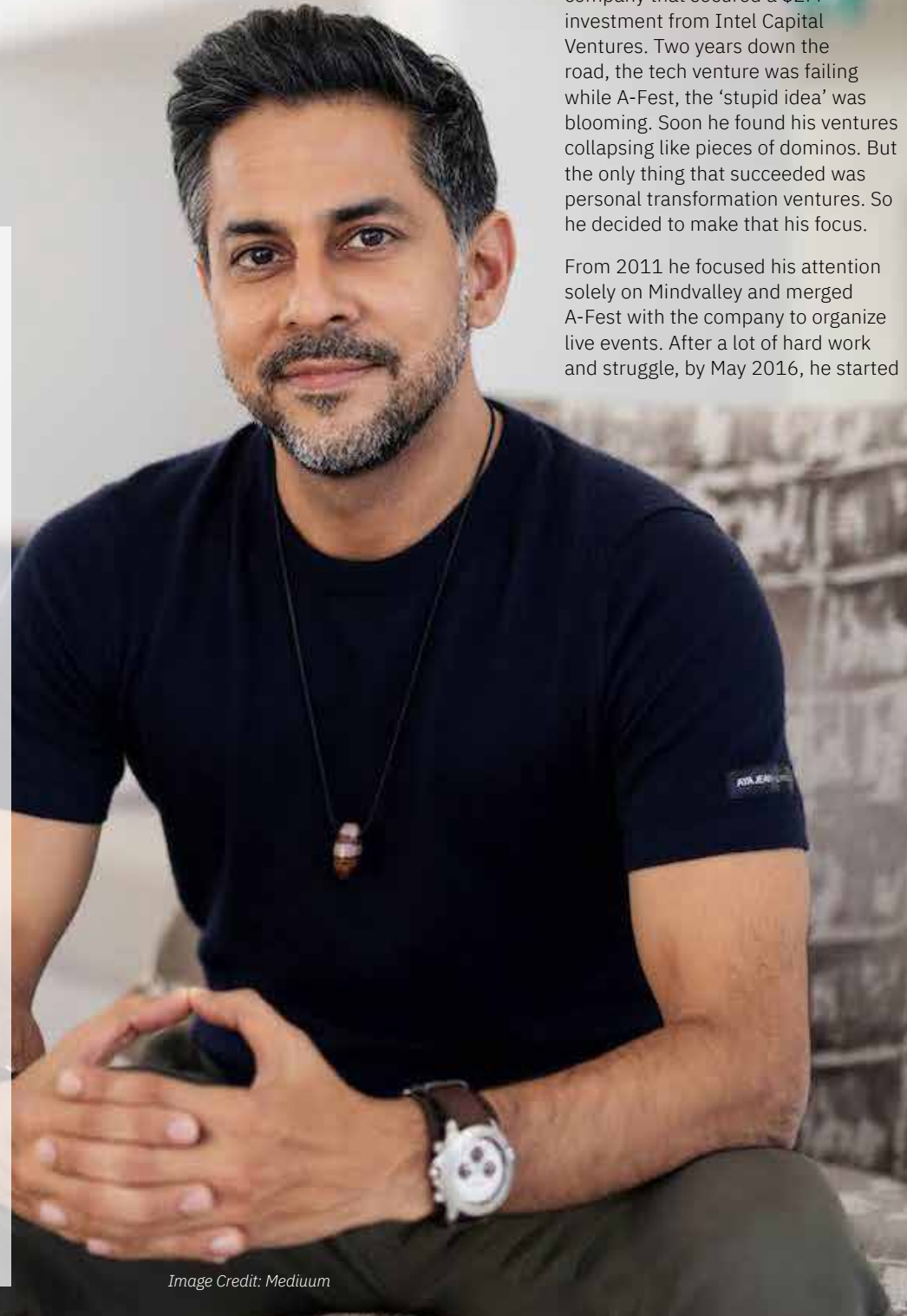


Image Credit: Medium



# Harnessing The Energy Of The Wind



Image Credit: TheXtraordinary

William Kamkwamba is a Malawian inventor and author. He gained popularity when he built a wind turbine to power multiple electrical appliances in his family's house in Wimbe, using blue gum trees, bicycle parts, and materials collected in a local scrapyard. An inventor who has since then helped his country flourish.

*Written by Brianna Da Cruz*

William Kamkwamba was born in a remote village in Malawi in 1987. He was raised in Masitala village along the central plains. He is one of seven children born to sustenance farmers who grew maize and tobacco and often struggled to make ends meet. The village was severely affected by droughts, and his childhood was constantly interrupted by long periods of hunger due to famines in the region.

When Kamkwamba was 12, he was captivated by electricity, a luxury that he could not afford. He started teaching himself radio repair work and began tinkering with bicycle dynamos, hoping to understand the inner workings of generators. During a devastating famine in 2001–02, Kamkwamba dropped out of high school during his first semester as his parents could not afford to pay his fees. The famine killed thousands of people in the region, but little Kamkwamba was determined to reach his quest to generate electricity. Rather than accepting his fate, Kamkwamba started borrowing books from a small community lending library located at his former primary school funded by the American government. He borrowed an 8th-grade American textbook called *Using Energy* that depicted wind turbines on its cover, and he was instantly mesmerized by the image. He soon had a plan and decided to build a windmill to power his family's home and impede the use of kerosene, which provided only smoky, flickering, distant and expensive light after dark that also made his sisters fall sick.

He recalled, "I didn't get any confidence from my family, but some of my friends

were very supportive of what I was doing, and from me, myself. I had confidence in myself after seeing the picture of the windmill in this book; I said to myself, 'Somewhere, somebody built this machine, and it was built by hand, and it was a human being who did that. I'm also a human being.'

He started by building a prototype using a simple radio motor. He built his initial 5-meter windmill out of trees, a tractor fan blade, a broken bicycle and an old shock absorber. He connected the windmill to a car battery to power four light bulbs and also charged his neighbours' mobile phones. His system was even equipped with light switches and a circuit breaker to cut off the flow of excess current created with magnets, wire, and nails. He later created a 12 meters windmill to better catch the wind above the trees. A third windmill pumped water for irrigation to provide water to the fields.

Kamkwamba's subsequent projects have included malaria prevention, clean water, lighting and solar power for six homes in his family compound; a drip irrigation system, deep water well with a solar-powered pump for clean water and also creating outfits for the village team Wimbe United with their first-ever uniforms and shoes. Since receiving their sun and wind-themed uniforms, the team has been on a winning streak that has brought the village together with pride.

The windmill project drew many visitors from kilometres around, including Dr Hartford Mchazime, PhD, the Deputy Director of the MTTA, the Malawian NGO responsible for the community library. The news of William's inventions

reached Emeka Okafor, Program Director for TEDGlobal, a prestigious gathering of thinkers and innovators. Okafor searched quite diligently to find William and invited him to the conference as a fellow. William's presentation led to additional mentors, donors, and companies supporting his education and subsequent projects in the village.

After his TED talk in 2007, he has spoken at the Aspen Ideas Festival and Maker Faire Africa, World Economic Forum, chatted with Al Gore, Bono, and Larry Page launched a documentary and released an inspirational book, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Morrow, co-authored with journalist Bryan Mealer.

He realized the role education plays in bringing about inventors that can transform villages and countries and started his school, The African Leadership Academy. He thinks the Internet is a potent tool, especially in a place like Malawi; he said in an interview, "As I said, I could have used this Google for my windmill. But it also brings people together. At my school [the African Leadership Academy], I have students from all over Africa and we all learn about each other's cultures. This is very important, especially in Africa where many wars are fought over land and tribal differences. You can also learn to read on the Internet, have access to a valuable education that you cannot get in the poor village schools. It really is a window to the wonderful world."

When asked if he approached the idea to generate electricity using windmills as a path to tackle the ongoing crisis of Climate Change, he said, "We don't talk about wind like it's helping climate change. We talk about wind and solar because it's a simpler and cheaper way to give us electricity and irrigation. Clean water and power is our right as humans on this earth, and for too long our governments in Africa have failed to provide these things. They also failed to bring us telephone lines, so we simply put up cell towers and now millions of Africans have mobile phones. We skip the problem by creating our own solutions. And yes, if this can save the planet in the process, then I am happy for that."

"I have students from all over Africa and we all learn about each other's cultures. This is very important, especially in Africa where many wars are fought over land and tribal differences. You can also learn to read on the Internet, have access to a valuable education that you cannot get in the poor village schools. It really is a window to the wonderful world."



# The Four Fundamentals Of Leadership

- Alexis Miller .....

**W**ouldn't you agree that when Steve Jobs stepped on stage, in his signature blue jeans, black turtleneck, and sneakers, the world waited with bated breath to hear him speak? He was a leader of unparalleled charisma who had a magnetic effect on buyers as well as shareholders.

However, Mahatma Gandhi was a different leader who had a global impact not because of his charisma, but due to his unique ability to inspire a common man to action. Although he never held a formal political title, his unique methods established him as one of the most revered leaders in the history of the world.

We could analyze the leadership styles of great leaders like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther, Ratan Tata, and many more only to arrive at the conclusion that they are distinctively different from each other. Yet these are individuals who are considered the epitome of leadership!

So what are the common traits that bind leadership styles, if there are any? After analyzing hundreds of business leaders who are driving flourishing businesses in today's volatile and dynamic marketplace, we bring you four fundamentals that make a consistent appearance.

## Vision

The first step towards attaining a goal is to envision it. Visionary leaders are driven and inspired by what a company can become; and how it can broaden its vision to help people. Henry Ford was a brilliant visionary ahead of his time. He enabled nearly everyone to have the ability to afford an automobile at a time when everyone thought such a thing was impossible to do. He simultaneously introduced technologies and innovations that changed the world, including mass production plants. The profound effect of this leadership quality was felt not just by the industry, but by the world at large.



## Agility

In a drastically evolving world, with disruptions happening every day, it is imperative to be flexible. Helmed by Jeff Bezos', Amazon is a befitting example of a company that has constantly reinvented itself to stay relevant to the market while keeping customer service at the heart of its business strategy. From selling books online, it has emerged into an e-commerce giant that serves every single need of a customer including entertainment! As a leader of the 21st century, it is not a desired trait but a survival technique to stay agile and adapt!

## Humility

The most successful leaders maintain that as they amassed power, they also deliberately worked on staying humble. Humility allows a leader to authentically listen to feedback, suggestions, and criticism with the right attitude and continue to stay of service in the most optimum way. An excellent example of humility was demonstrated by Leo Varadkar, Former Prime Minister of Ireland who returned to his medical practice in 2020 to work as a doctor for one session a week to help out during the coronavirus epidemic and serve his people in the best way he could.

## Trust

Organizations are built on trust,

especially in an economy where remote working has become the norm. Research shows that highly-trusted workplaces enjoy:

- 50% higher employee productivity
- 106% more energy at work
- 13% fewer sick days
- Companies with high trust levels outperform companies with low trust levels by 186%.

Buffer upholds the principle of trust in its mission that states that their employees at every level should 'default to transparency.' Technology plays a significant role in keeping their remote organization connected with a level of trust. For example, they use Slack to make real-time communications easy and to streamline workflow. Buffer also uses a transparent email system so that every employee can see their co-workers' emails, which keeps everyone in the loop.

Many employees praise Buffer's transparent workplace culture, which is why their Glassdoor page shows a 4.5-star rating. But this is a much higher level of transparency than most companies use.

While following these four fundamentals may seem deceptively easy, it may not necessarily be so. It is, however, most certainly worthwhile if an aspiring leader desires to consistently drive stellar results in their organizations.

# Chatbots And The Ever Changing Consumer Experience

- Justin Robert .....

**C**hatbots are software programs that enable and stimulate a textual or voice-based conversation with a user through applications, websites or phone. Chatbots are famously known as one of the most technologically advanced forms of interaction between humans and machines.

Chatbots were often only seen as robotic interaction and were dismissed due to the myth of lacking the human touch. However, natural language processing (NLP) has revolutionised chatbot technology and helped customers feel like they're talking to an actual human.

## Why have chatbots generated interest?

With the COVID-19 pandemic, customer needs for a seamless and swift online experience have doubled. In this age of e-convenience, buyer patience is minimal and is a vital factor that companies need to consider. Almost ¾ of buyers expect a response within 10 minutes to any marketing, sales, or customer service inquiry. This frightening statistic highlights that companies critically need to use advanced technology to maintain consumer satisfaction. It is impractical, costly and nearly unachievable to adequately cater to impatient consumers without using technology. Customers have flocked to brands that provide quick assistance and consistency. The sudden saturation in e-commerce services have created intense competition and is driving brands to strengthen their customer experience strategies.

Chatbot applications efficiently modernize interactions between people and services. They allow businesses to interact with individual consumers impeccably and provide companies with opportunities to increase and improve customer engagement levels. The rising use of chatbots has allowed consumers to feel quickly heard.

## Do chatbots provide substantial benefits to a company?

Chatbots have allowed companies to develop a strong USP and brand image associated with care and personalisation. Chatbots help businesses gain valuable insight into user experience (UX) by tracking and collecting data from chatbot conversations. Chatbots can also compile user demographics and allow businesses to easily compile leads. These leads can be sent to sales representatives who can then follow up with the consumers. These chatbots can also filter out serious and valuable consumers to minimise wastage in the organisation.

Further, efficiency is also maximised as chatbots allow uniform and streamlined with an ability to cover a larger amount of customer concerns and questions across multiple devices worldwide. Chatbots facilitate this enhanced customer experience while creating a reduction in the hefty cost of customer service. Some chatbots even allow payments via chats and search options. Sectors across the world, including government and education, have expanded their chatbot services to further improve user satisfaction.

## Do customers react positively to chatbots?

Companies have started to utilize the prominent advantages that chatbots offer. 80% of routine customer queries have been resolved by relying on chatbots to answer basic consumer queries and provide useful information. These chatbots have also successfully pushed sales and accurately recommended products for the customer. 48% of consumers prefer connecting with a company through live chat than any other means of contact and 57% prefer chatbots because of their accelerated nature. The strong preference towards chats proves that chatbots are an important aspect of a consumer experience.

According to a survey conducted by Helpshift, 94% of over 2,000 respondents dread contacting customer support. Chatbots can also help customers manage



and create appointments for further and elaborate queries. Chatbots not only enable customers to get answers to basic queries instantly, they are also excellent in classifying the queries they are unable to resolve and sending them to appropriate agents/departments for resolution. Their 24/7 availability feature allows maximum consumer convenience and reduce the dissatisfaction that is often received via manual customer service and their limited time frame.

Moreover, if chatbots are integrated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine-Learning (ML), the natural conversation is incorporated with personalisation. AI chatbots are flexible and actively learn more with each interaction. Real-time personalisation within the context of the conversation can also greatly improve CX. Bots can create continuity and refer to earlier conversations to guide users effectively. Conclusively, chatbots have proved to be the answer to unsatisfactory customer service and their numerous cost-saving benefits make it a perfect tool for every business in the age of e-commerce.



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*— Michelle Obama*

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