

# The Leadership Mosaic

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LEADERSHIP - STRATEGY - TEAM - EXECUTION

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## Asia Pacific Leadership in Crisis

Leadership roles in the technology sector pay well. In return, consistent performance is the demand. Over recent months, the heat has been turned up by the market and in turn, this puts additional performance pressure on Asia Pacific leaders. HQ is demanding that you do more with less. The targets have not softened, but the pipeline has and the excuses about slippery deals are gaining in creativity.

The reality needs to be accepted that markets are cyclical and leaders need to be able to operate in good times and bad. For many, the current environment is being seen as a crisis. Leadership in a crisis is a sport for the bold.

The constant here is the ability to drive growth. In a growing economic environment, looking after an existing customer base can bring you growth on its own. In today's economic environment, taking new market share to gain access to more clients is the headline strategy of every vendor in APJ. Unfortunately for some, their organisations are not prepared for the competitive ferocity they now face.

Right now, SVP's across the region are asking themselves if their sales team are up to the task. How do they assure themselves that the answer is yes, and what should they do if the answer is no?

Most will categorise their team as A, B and C players. The A's are the jewels that shine no matter what and need to be locked in to the company. The B's or average performers will pay their way. The C's will contribute by giving obvious targets when you are forced to reduce headcount.

There is a serious threat to this plan when companies don't have any strategy to retain the A's and B's. The loss of an A player sales executive in a negative market cycle can be disastrous and difficult to recover from. As a search firm, we serve our clients by helping their competitors "un-retain" their key executives. There are clear patterns where some companies are good at retaining their key people and others have never even thought about it.

Here are four simple leadership tactics that can help:

1. People need to know that they are contributing to a mission that they believe in and they want to be recognised for their contribution. If they don't believe in the captain, they will find another ship. A big factor affecting the economy today is uncertainty. It's the same in your company. Uncertainty breeds fear. Communicate.
2. Financial rewards are not top of the list but are important. If people feel they are being underpaid by comparison to equivalent roles in other companies, loyalty and trust is lost.
3. Stock or other forms of deferred payment (this needs to be realisable) help people to think very carefully about leaving. With salespeople, a healthy pipeline helps.
4. Company investment in Professional development, plays a key role in building loyalty. Mentoring and formal education programs provide purpose and progress for individuals. The Deloitte Leadership Academy is a great example of how companies can now affordably outsource this with big impact.

The uncertain market conditions we are now living with are here for a while. Nothing will replace pro-active leadership.

*Mark Braithwaite is an executive director and co founder of Braithwaite Steiner Pretty. Since 1997, Mark has worked with global Technology vendors in building their leadership teams across Asia Pacific.*



Mark Braithwaite  
Director  
Braithwaite Steiner Pretty

# Are great marketing leaders found or created?

Hugh Macfarlane

**Until businesses address three critical gaps in their understanding of the role of Marketing, great marketers must be found rather than created.**

To create great marketers, businesses must:

- ▶ Increase the executive understanding of how great marketing works;
- ▶ Clearly define what role Marketing is to play in the overall demand process; and
- ▶ Build a plan to develop the key skills needed by Marketing to play this role successfully.

## Executive understanding

Most senior managers know enough about business accounting and finance to work through reasonably meaty business issues with their CFO. And the same holds for law, HR, corporate affairs, manufacturing, engineering, distribution, marketing and sales; senior managers understand the basics of each of these disciplines. Many CEO's will have emerged with a stronger grounding in one of these, and may have taken further studies – often an MBA – to round out their skills and provide them with a deeper understanding of this broad suite of capabilities.

But most MBA's – as with more specialised undergraduate studies in marketing – teach consumer marketing where 'brand' is king. In business marketing 'demand' is king, yet few universities teach executives how to build demand in business markets. As a result, businesses waste millions on branding, advertising and price-based promotions and leave Sales to do their own spade-work (create their own demand). Marketers have largely proven themselves ineffective at demand creation.

## Marketing's role

But this demand creation is exactly what Marketing should be doing. In a global study of 1400 leaders from 84 countries we identified that businesses which had correctly aligned their Marketing and Sales functions were out-stripping their competitors by an average of 5.4% annually. They were also enjoying much better closure rates and were superior at retaining their customers.

In these businesses, Marketing spent no less than 40% – and often as much as 75% – of their marketing budget on creating demand, and no more than 25% – and often less – on branding and other 'conditioning' activities.

This means the business needs to define its complete end-to-end demand process (from finding new names through to engaging in repeat business) and then identify which of these progressions Marketing is best-equipped to own and which are best handled by Sales. And don't fall for the trap of asking Marketing to handle top of funnel activity and leaving the bottom to Sales; this needs to be a jointly-owned process from top to bottom.

In *The Leaky Funnel*, I described the process of CEO Sue Hunt leading her team through the process of defining this journey – I coined the term 'the buyer's journey' – and selecting the best tactics to move buyers through each stage.

How can a business build a great Marketing leader from within if it hasn't clearly defined its demand process; let alone the role Marketing is to play in this?

## Build skills

Marketers need to be skilled in:

- ▶ Defining organisational and go-to-market strategy;
- ▶ Building demand campaigns that can last at least as long as the buying cycle – often months or even years (not campaigns designed to last just a few weeks – as most traditionally are);
- ▶ Designing and executing all of the major B2B tactics (including seminars, white papers, email marketing, search engine marketing, PR, direct mail, tele-marketing and tele-nurturing); and
- ▶ Sizing and measuring the effectiveness of the business' end-to-end funnel.

We recommend allocating no less than 10% of a marketer's salary to training and development. And for marketers singled out for rapid acceleration into leadership positions, add another 10% and get them mentored by the best business marketing grey-hair in your town.

Until businesses address all three gaps – executive understanding, Marketing's role in the demand process, and skill gaps – great marketers must be found rather than created.

*Hugh Macfarlane is the author of *The Leaky Funnel*, and is founder and CEO of MathMarketing. Over 230 projects, ten years and four continents, MathMarketing has helped companies to ramp the performance of their Sales and Marketing engines with clear plans and the skills to execute. [www.mathmarketing.com](http://www.mathmarketing.com)*



Hugh Macfarlane  
CEO  
MathMarketing

# Overcoming your flaws as a team leader

Chris Golis

**In my book, *The Humm Handbook: Lifting Your Level of Emotional Intelligence*, I define leaders as having three core emotional drives: the desire to win, the desire to communicate and the desire for material success. The desire to win manifests itself in two essential attributes for leaders: the ability to focus and the ability to handle conflict.**

## Focus

Contrary to the popular view, successful general managers are not general. Typically the people who become managing directors do so by focusing their energy and avoiding wasted effort. They succeed by focusing their efforts in one industry and generally one company.



Chris Golis  
Author, Public Speaker  
and Trainer

## Conflict

Leaders are willing to engage, when necessary in conflict and confrontation. Many people believe that to get along you go along. This belief is inculcated from an early age. However, leaders have discovered that conflict will often provide you far more power than pliability. Expecting a team to always agree and work in complete harmony is unrealistic and conflicts do occur. The typical advice given to team leaders in conflict situations is to cool down so that their emotions don't cause them to overreact. Instead, the advice is to try to understand the other person's perspective or collaborating to develop creative solutions to the problem. However, this does not mean the conflict should be avoided. Otherwise, whatever good can come from discussing differences is lost or at least postponed. At the same time, the bad things that can come from conflict are brewing under the surface and will eventually emerge.

While the good leader through the desire to win has the necessary focus and ability to handle conflict there is usually a number of habits that develop over time that can seriously affect his or her promotional prospects. In his book *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, Marshall Goldsmith, a leading USA business coach, lists 20 bad habits that good leaders may develop yet need to stop. Here are three that usually associated with the desire to win.

## Passing the Buck

Of all the bad habits, this is perhaps the one which most destroys a leader's credibility before the team. A leader who cannot shoulder the blame is not someone we will follow blindly into battle. We instinctively question the individual's loyalty and so hold back our loyalty. Everyone notices when you blame someone else – and no one is impressed. Typically the desire to win in such individuals is so strong that they need to be seen as infallible. Funnily enough the key lesson from the customer service trainers is rarely adopted by leaders. Consumers judge a customer service business not so much when it does something right, but how it handles matters when things go wrong. How well you own up to your mistakes makes a much bigger impression than how you revel in your successes.

## Telling the world how smart we are

Those who are driven by the desire to win usually need to be perceived, if not as the smartest person in the room then at least the intellectual leader. The classic response by such individuals to a team member who is giving a presentation or opinion is "I already knew that". The problem is not that such leaders are merely boasting about what they know; they are insulting their team members. Stopping this behaviour is not hard – just develop this three stage routine. First ask yourself "Is there anything that I may say worth it? Secondly conclude that it isn't. Third say "Thank you".

## Winning too much

Many people have a competitive streak but it is very common in leaders. Not only do they want to win when the issue is important, but also when the issue is trivial or a matter when winning is against their own self-interest. Goldsmith quotes the wonderful example when you and your partner are in conflict about the choice of a restaurant, and you naturally end up at your partner's choice. The wine list is expensive, the service slow and the food poorly prepared. You have two choices, critique the restaurant and let your partner know how much better the night would have been if your selection had been chosen, or shut up, mentally write it off and enjoy the evening. If you ask a group of leaders what they would do, 75% admit they would critique the restaurant when they should make the second choice. However if you ask the partners of the 25% who say they would make the second choice, the reply is uncontrolled mirth and total disagreement as to the choice they would actually make. Unfortunately this habit of Winning too much is very widespread, particularly among competitive leaders.

Learning how to control this bad habit of Winning too much is perhaps the useful step a potential leader can take to ensure team harmony and achieve career progression.

*Chris Golis is an author, public speaker and trainer. He worked in the IT industry for 15 years and then as a venture capitalist for the next 20, sitting on the boards of some 30 companies. He wrote his most recent book *The Humm Handbook: Lifting Your Level of Emotional Intelligence* for his elder daughter Louisa when she was appointed a manager at Perpetual Trustees. [www.thehummandhandbook.com](http://www.thehummandhandbook.com)*

## Proactive planning for change

Andrew Dutton

**We are witnessing a remarkable change taking place in the markets around the world. Most directives from the executive teams are to decrease cost, stop hiring and weather the storm – protect the bottom line. Strategic goals are still in the background but most of your managers and sales people will start to talk about ‘quota relief’ shortly. There is a lot of false excuse embedded in the reality starting to come through many first line management teams.**

All but the worst doomsayers believe that this downturn will last. In fact in Asia Pacific, growth rates are still higher than they were last year in the US and Europe.

Can you use this time to gain advantage now or prepare to gain advantage in the future?



Andrew Dutton  
consults to global  
companies on their  
expansion in APJ

For leaders of business there is some silver lining in these storm clouds. Good management, technical people and sales representatives will move to businesses that have strong positive messages and leaders with clear vision. Now may be the time to look at re-energising your sales teams and replacing the weakness you see in your strategic management. It is also time to look at how your messages are being delivered and translated, both in your action and in your discussions.

Now is the time to invest in a short term plan. If the market starts to rapidly grow again, in say 12 months, what would you do today if you had no constraints?

Who would you invest in? Which customers and prospects become critical for success? What messages, actions and direction will you deliver to lead your teams through this period of uncertainty?

If you plan to be pro-active and manage the current situation, getting some external 'eyes' to look at your sales teams and managers and compare notes can be helpful. Your perceptions are usually correct but external eyes can balance and verify your thoughts.

Your methods will vary - in some cases you may want to get every sales person to present to you. In other cases, individuals' recent actions will be sufficient for you to act. Don't be dismayed if you construct a list where the majority of your sales team or management team no longer fits your business in certain areas. You are not alone nor unique. Modest growth in share today will reward the business greatly tomorrow – the discomfort will be worth it.

We have all replaced people who have left the business. The loss of reps or managers is not a damaging action for your business, if it is planned.

Planning your actions by looking into a 12-month future, making decisions and communicating those decisions will change the way your business is reacting today and how it will act in the future. What you do now may have dramatic effect on your business and your career.

Most clouds have a silver lining...

**“If you plan to be pro-active and manage the current situation, getting some external 'eyes' to look at your sales teams and managers and compare notes can be helpful. Your perceptions are usually correct but external eyes can balance and verify your thoughts...”**

*Until recently, Andrew Dutton was SVP and GM International at CA. He has also held senior executive roles in a number of leading international companies across EMEA and APJ. Andrew now consults to global technology companies as they expand their footprint in APJ.*

## Braithwaite Steiner Pretty

The success of many high growth technology companies in Asia Pacific has a common link..... it's their partnership with BSP. That partnership has worked to build high performance leadership teams that consistently produce industry leading growth in the heart of the world's economic powerhouse. Without doubt, Asia Pacific is the centre of global economic growth now and for as far ahead as anyone can see. How strong is your leadership team in Asia Pacific?

BSP is an executive search firm whose sole focus is to help its clients achieve their maximum growth potential in Asia Pacific. This focus brings to our clients a solution that is aligned with their needs and is therefore much more effective than the global search firms with their outdated, slow, expensive and inflexible offerings.

We have worked to make it easy for our clients to engage with us. The BSP offices in Japan, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, India, Korea and Australia, mirror the key business hubs of our clients and offer total regional coverage. The BSP team are all experienced "industry insiders" who work with passion to complete every engagement within tight timelines. Also, after 11 years of flawless execution, we have built a regional community of trust which gives us quick access to the best possible talent.

The BSP reputation has been built on a track record of consistent delivery of results and effective representation of client interests since 1997. Our long-term client relationships are sustained because we deliver on the promise...every time.

We have successfully recruited over 700 executives across Asia Pacific since 1997. Our offices across the region are equipped to support the needs of the largest corporate clients as well as early-stage market entrants. We have experience and strong pedigree in a diverse range of disciplines including:

- Software
- Hardware & Systems
- Services & Consulting
- Telecommunications
- Communications, Entertainment & Web
- Electronics
- Emerging Technologies
- PC & Peripherals
- Clean Technology
- Venture Capital

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