



Contemporary Challenges: Making a Difference

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Blog post 1 - How Responsible Stewardship is Capturing the Hearts of Today's generation

In a world where consumers are more informed and aware than ever, responsible stewardship is becoming a significant influence on consumer behaviour, especially among younger age groups. The younger generations, specifically Millennials and Gen Z have a strong desire for brands to be transparent, sustainable, and ethical in their actions. Companies that adopt responsible stewardship not only meet these expectations but also thrive in a competitive market by gaining the loyalty of this influential demographic.

Responsible stewardship involves the thorough and responsible management of resources that have been entrusted to someone's care, with a focus on long-term sustainability and the overall welfare of society. Stewardship goes beyond corporate social responsibility by encompassing not just a company's ethical conduct and societal influence, but also the management of natural resources, environmental preservation, and the well-being of the community. Historically associated with leadership roles, the concept of stewardship has evolved to emphasise the significance of protecting resources for future generations. This statement defines the obligations and tasks of a steward, with an emphasis on the conscientious management and protection of assets in several domains. Responsible stewardship has a connection to both sustainability and climate change. The main focus is on developing sustainable solutions that encourage innovation and social responsibility, while recognising the interdependence of environmental and social outcomes. Managing climate change, leaders should emphasise stewardship by considering the long-term effects, including various stakeholders, and adopting environmentally conscious policies.

The Rise of Conscious Consumers

In today's era, everyone is becoming more aware of the significance of sustainability and the impact that their choices have on the environment. In this blog post, I will be talking about how responsible stewardship has the potential to attract a wide range of consumers especially for businesses like Hygr. Millennials and Gen Z are drawn to eco-friendly goods because they are more likely to have strong beliefs about the environment and are more interested in supporting companies that are both innovative and socially responsible. Sustainable goods also have a great credibility among middle-aged and older consumers for their health benefits and quality. It leaves a beneficial legacy for future generations. A company's dedication to sustainability can win over customers' loyalty and trust if it caters to their various needs and values.

Sustainable products are goods that are intentionally created and produced in manners that limit the negative impact on the environment. This is done through the utilisation of sustainable resources, minimising waste, and guaranteeing ethical labour practices across all phases of the production process. Corporate social responsibility includes a

company's overall ethical impact, which includes charitable activities and adherence to ethical labour standards. On the other hand, sustainable products specifically focus on the environmental aspects of production and consumption. This focus on sustainability involves not just the ethical aspects of corporate social responsibility but it also incorporates practical changes in production design, material procurement, and production processes to achieve measurable, environmentally successful outcomes. Thus, focusing on the major issues that lead to climate change. However, achieving this goal can pose challenges due to factors such as high production costs, limited access to sustainable resources, and the need for technological progress. Furthermore, consumers are more likely to be interested in more affordable and conventional products which can lead to the broad wants of sustainable alternatives. These matters stress the importance of cooperative efforts by companies, consumers, and governments to solve issues and promote responsible production and consumption practices that can effectively tackle climate change.

Hygr is a local Malaysian brand owned by a couple named Ivor and Meng. They began their business during the government-imposed movement control order. They utilised sustainable materials throughout the whole production process, from the initial raw goods to the final packaging. Their selection of products has garnered significant interest from locals. They offer products that are of excellent quality and are also highly cost-effective, which makes it a bonus. The couple did a good job in paying attention to detail in all aspects of their products. Hygr initially began by providing all natural lip balm and deodorant. Hygr started operating in a small room in Meng's parent's house, but gained recognition in Malaysia and has since been a popular choice for many individuals, hence why they need a warehouse. They also recently introduced a new product, a natural sunscreen, and have further improved their deodorant by making it refillable. The marketing strategy of the company is one of the significant factors in their success.

Due to the increase in demand that led Hygr to expand, they ensured to grow its business while staying true to its values of sustainability and good management. This growth shows that Hygr is committed to providing eco-friendly goods that appeal to a wide range of customers. As Hygr grows, it will be hard for it to keep up the same level of careful attention to environmentally friendly practices that made it so famous in the first place. This means finding long-lasting materials that don't hurt the earth too much, treating workers fairly, and using eco-friendly ways to make things. It's clear that the company cares about the environment because it makes eco-friendly products like refillable deodorants that cut down on trash and support a circular economy. By putting these practices at the top of its list of priorities, Hygr makes sure that its growth doesn't hurt the natural values that are important to it.

Blog post 2 - Are Robots Replacing humans? This is the Role of AI in the Workforce

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a swiftly progressing technology that includes the development of computer systems with the ability to execute tasks that usually necessitate human intelligence. This includes a range of methods, such as machine learning, natural language processing, and robotics. These technologies enable the imitation of intellectual abilities in machines, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and perception. AI's continuous improvement has changed numerous industries by introducing advanced technologies that enhance efficiency, accuracy, and decision making capabilities.

AI has a notable benefit in enhancing efficiency through the automation of repetitive processes. This process of automation improves efficiency and allows staff to dedicate their attention to more difficult and innovative tasks. AI algorithms are specifically created to analyse large amounts of data with lesser errors that could help result in enhanced decision making accuracy in several domains. AI is crucial in several areas such as healthcare and business as it plays a vital role in detecting trends and patterns. This can result in the creation of new treatments or the improvements of business strategies. AI's ability to process data at a faster and more precise rate than humans offers significant potential for advanced innovations and improvements.

However, AI also has its own challenges and disadvantages. One of the major concerns now is job displacement as AI can replace human labour. This could cause unemployment and disruption in the economy. AI algorithms can also pick up any biases from the data they are trained on that can result in unfair or discriminatory outcomes. Privacy concerns regarding the AI system have also been raised by many because they collect and analyse a lot of personal data, which brings up issues of data protection and privacy. These are the challenges that people have to take into consideration and to always have control over AI technologies so that no one gets hurt by it.

Ethics are referred to as a system of moral principles or rules that guide what is considered acceptable behaviour. It encompasses questions about what is morally right or wrong and what people ought to do (Singer, 2024). Ethical concerns are crucial as AI continues to spread around. There are several ethical issues that a leader needs to consider before making a decision to implement AI to ensure fair and responsible use of the technology. Firstly, leaders must ensure that they are free from any biases to avoid picking up data that could lead to unfairness. Leaders must also take the privacy concerns into consideration as AI processes a lot of personal data. To protect user privacy and compliance with data protection regulations, strict measures have to be taken. Leaders need to keep in mind that they also need to be held accountable if their AI system makes bad choices. The most important concern that I believe all leaders should take into account is that AI could very much affect many jobs. Leaders need to

play an important role to plan for staff changes and skill building to lessen these effects (Williams, 2023). Implementing ethical AI is crucial for long-term success and reducing risk, thus leaders must carefully consider before making a decision to implement it.

Blog post 3 - How we can enhance global leadership skills

A leader is someone who guides or directs a group, organisation, or country toward goal achievements. They hold authority, influence, and make critical decisions. A global leader, on the other hand, goes beyond state borders. They are very good at navigating the foreign scene, making connections between people from different cultures, and helping businesses and communities around the world grow. A global leader has both traditional leadership skills and a global mindset, which helps them work well in settings that are complicated and full of different people (*What Is Global Leadership?* | Thunderbird, 2023).

Being a global leader, of course skills are needed. There are several skills that a global leader needs to guide and influence. The first key skill for global leadership is cultural intelligence (CQ). Cultural intelligence means being able to understand and use different cultural values, ways of communicating, and ways of acting. It requires understanding, interest, and being open to different points of view. This is crucial because global leaders work with groups of people from a wide range of backgrounds. In order to improve collaboration and productivity, individuals ought to have the ability to establish relationships and foster trust with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Conflict, uncertainty, and poor interaction can create complications in the working environment, making it challenging to achieve goals. Global leaders must embrace cultural knowledge in order to navigate the complicated domain of global trade. At CQ, they gain knowledge of regional disparities, which facilitates their collaboration with partners, clients, and team members from diverse backgrounds. Trust is more likely to be built when individuals retain a comprehensive understanding of each other's cultures, which is crucial for fostering an effective work dynamic. Enhancing cultural intelligence may also encourage leaders in establishing more effective connections and teams that are open and productive. This boosts the efficiency of a business in a globalised world.

Next is strategic thinking. This includes considering difficult circumstances, projecting future trends, and long-term planning. It should consider local as well as global matters. Strategic planning is something leaders have to implement as the environments that are constantly changing define their reality. Strategic planning helps them reduce their risks, locate chances for development, and negotiate global markets. This is done to guarantee that the objectives of the company complement global truth. To manage a complicated environment that is changing quickly, global leaders must be able to think strategically. Considering developments in geopolitics, the economy, and modern technologies demands focus on changes in geography as well. These leaders that use strategic thinking remain adaptable and quick to react to developments. By doing this, global leaders can make wise decisions considering both immediate problems and long-term objectives, therefore ensuring success in a society undergoing fast change.

Cross-cultural communication will be the last ability I will be covering. Cross-cultural

communication is the capacity of one to interact successfully and productively with others from many backgrounds. It involves paying close attention, changing how one speaks, and reading nonverbal signals. But this is absolutely important as global teams usually include people from many cultures, languages, and time zones. Effective communication helps people from all around to cooperate. This helps to let people avoid misunderstandings and promote peace. Without cross-cultural communication, conflict may occur which can lead to slow production. Hence why this is one of the major skills global leadership needs. Effective communication helps resolve conflict in various aspects. Clear communication overcomes cultural barriers, fostering collaboration and harmonious interaction among team members regardless of their backgrounds. Moreover, miscommunication is likely to enhance tensions, which is why cross-cultural communication is essential in every business.

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