

Better Me

What could a three-day program do for me? A lot: A lot of surprises and a lot of lessons. Marathon training on a cold Tuesday night, stair-walking with CEO from ground floor to the twelve and a suddenly arranged meeting with Smartone; inspiring lessons from William and the entire company. All these, just one three intensive days, make (inspired by my favorite singer in Hong Kong Fiona) a better me, not just today, but also in the future.

Running, stair walking, lunch buffet, in-person conversation with CEO, to name but a few, there are just too many surprises compressed in three days. Among the many, attaching with the former 'Future CXO', Mingo Tsang, for a meeting with Smartone on the second day is wordlessly remarkable. The first time to be involved in a business meeting; the first time to represent a company; the first time to witness a successful deal, just so many first times. I will never forget that particular moment, when the six Smartone representatives, while handing me their cards, recognized me as part of HKBN. That awesome feeling! Can you believe a university student, who simply joined a three-day program, could receive such an immerse sense of recognition: being recognized as a business bargainer and being recognized as a HKBN representative. No joking, this scene is still flowing around in my head, profoundly.

Of course, I joined, or was selected, not just to experience; but to learn, from both William and HKBN itself. Let me first talk about two great lessons learnt from the CEO.

Thanks to the gentle arrangement by the company, Charles, another participant of this program, and I were able to squeeze inside HKBN's CEO's super busy timetable, having a couple of precious chances to talk, and eat, with him in person. Wai Gor, a big-time name he wanted us to use when calling him, is unarguably (I guess no HKBN crew would ever disagree) one of the most friendly, caring and sharp business leaders in Hong Kong. From more than five hours of in-person conversation sessions (quite a lot in three days only, in terms of a CEO's busyness), he gave me, at least, two thought-provoking lessons.



The first lesson: how to make decisions like a CEO?

Before I had started my three-day journey, I always knew one of the daily challenges of a CEO was making decisions, decisions and, still, decisions. Not to my surprise, that was exactly the case of Wai Gor. From a recently conducted consumer survey to a five-year plan, from choosing which restaurant to designing a marketing campaign, Wai Gor had to take care. When stuffed by a mountain of works, how does Wai Gor overcome? This is his secret: 'Value/Impact Theory'. All back to the first chapter of our economics book: opportunity cost. Wai Gor told me, 'When a number of choices are facing you, you instantly have to measure their inherent values/impacts to your company, your various stakeholders and yourself, then compare their respective values and impacts, and you can find out your answer.' This is the straight and strong secret behind his endless success in making countless of decisions in HKBN for more than nine years. 'Value and Impact', the two new words now pop up to my mind whenever I have to make decisions. Thanks Wai Gor.

The second lesson: in the end, people matter the most.

'No matter how great your products or services are, no matter how wealthy your company is; in the end, people in the company, and your beloved, are the most important thing...' When I asked why Wai Gor still has not brought HKBN beyond its local boundary, he gave me this answer, and he continued, 'If I really spend a lot of time on planning to expand my business, I am sure I am going to abandon my family; and that is a 100% NO for me.' Perhaps, I am young; ambition is always the biggest word in my eyes; but his reason for not being *too* ambitious did shock me: his devotion to his family. I am pretty sure, without his genuine reminder, I would quite easily forget the irreplaceable position of my beloved on the road to pursuing my aspiration. Regardless how great you are, a person still has to strike a balance between work and life. Thanks Wai Gor.

The last lesson (from Wai Gor and HKBN as a whole): Three killer components in product success

The continued success of HKBN in ISP has given a new insight into how to build a great product with the following three indispensable elements: maximization of value, minimization of cost and beating your competitors. Of course, I know many examples of great products: iPhones, BB1000 or Google; but when asked how to generalize their success formula, I, now, can give this cool answer.



So who is Better Me?

On 3rd December, the last day of the program, I once thought everything was over, but it was not. Immediately after the end of that day's schedule, Charles and I were invited to join the senior managers in HKBN hiking on Friday; a couple of days later, we were invited to be part of the company's Christmas Party. Oh my god, frankly, where can someone find a better company than HKBN: Limitless support, care and invitations, for two three-day visitors. So impressed by this culture, together with its innovation-orientation, talent development and exciting day-to-day challenges, I made one of my proudest decisions in my university life: requesting a short-term internship in the Enterprise Solution Team in May next year. This was the boldest request I could ever have imagined. But let me take my boldness to another level: in that one month with HKBN, I am so confident I am going to bring my best values, efforts and energy to this company. If I call joining 'Shadow a CEO Program' is my first step towards my business career, I will, without the slightest hesitation, say 'joining HKBN, though for short term' is a great leap. Thanks HKBN. Thanks Wai Gor. Thanks Classified Post. One day, when I become a C-level officer, I will be super proud to say, 'These three days were one of my finest hours.' (Inspired by my

Ritchie Wong
10.12.2014



How HKBN Gears Up with Global Standard?

Why HKBN?

Candidly, upon joining the programme, neither was I invited to indicate my preference nor HKBN was of my first preference in mind, due to my limited knowledge of the telecommunications industry.

However, the 3-day experience in HKBN with Mr. William Yeung has definitely “wow-ed” me and proved my first thought wrong. It is especially HKBN’s global standard attained, along with William’s strong leadership, that deeply impressed me and stimulated my thoughts.

William as the CEO

A competent CEO is always critical to a company’s success. Although William has always emphasized the importance of having a strong work team, there are a couple of aspects that I observed particularly from him during the three days, which have my great respect.

Always looking at the impact

During the conversation with William, he did not hesitate to suggest himself as a result-oriented person. “I always look at the impact first for every matter,” William responded upon being asked about strategies in managing the entire company. Particularly overseeing a huge and growing business, time has become so limited for William. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize well various company matters for consideration, in which impact of one matter is the factor. This allowed William to be more efficient in his work as a CEO.





Attending meetings with William

Such behaviour could also be observed from his meetings with his team. Take the monthly meeting with the Sales & Marketing department as an example. He was very direct and active in understanding the company's performance through different indicators. Upon

discovering rooms for improvement, he was very focused on analyzing the causes of problem and leading the team in coming up with effective solutions. From the meetings, it seems that every member of the team is clear with the company's core purpose to "make our Hong Kong a better place to live". This is also what William always bears in mind. Therefore, in order to drive a company to success, a strong leadership, along with clear company goals, is the key.

Open to challenge and new ideas

In a bid to responding the market change quickly, especially in the dynamic industry HKBN is placed in, William has been very open to challenge and new ideas. He always encourages the younger generation to express their ideas that are innovative to further



Conversation with William, the CEO

raise company's competitiveness. During the meetings, he is also very open to challenges, which allows the team to contribute fully without hindrance. He also understands the importance of having a global view. To this end, the company actively supports Talents to gain exposure in other countries and come back to share their experience to stimulate others to see if there is anything to learn from. Even in our conversation with William, Ritchie and I were invited to point

out any shortcomings of or recommendations to HKBN. Therefore, I do feel HKBN's diversity despite it being a local company.

Unique culture that connects everyone

The unique culture of HKBN is probably the most impressive part that I felt deeply in the programme. Talents, including the management team, are very connected during and after work.

At work, every Talent is ambitious in bringing something of value to the company. Company's extensive support to Talents has undoubtedly facilitated the bonding among them. Different talent development programmes not merely,



as William mentioned, allow Talents to self-actualize, but also provide platforms for them to interact with others. These are conducive to different collaboration as they work in different department.

After work, Talents have also been leading to an exciting life. It was a remarkable experience to join the company's running practice and feel the energy among them.

I am pretty sure it is such culture that has boosted every Talent to strive for the best, giving rise to the positive performance of the company throughout the years.

Spirit of talents boosted by co-ownership

Another unique feature of HKBN is its co-ownership mechanism. As William suggested, HKBN is probably one of the first few companies in Hong Kong that adopt this practice. "People", as one of the two most valuable



Lunch with some of the co-owners

assets William view of HKBN (the other is "Product"), appear to be well recognized in HKBN through their work. With an ownership in the company, Talents are more motivated to work at their best. This strategy is also adopted by other global companies, which positive outcomes are well reflected, gearing HKBN in maintaining its competitiveness.

Reflection of the programme – To or not to be a CEO?

It may sound peculiar that being the future CEO has not been my primary purpose of joining the "Shadow a CEO" programme. However, it is always my belief that one, no matter taking up which role, has to think from a broad perspective. Therefore, it had been my expectation to learn from William how to think as a CEO and resolve various issues effectively and efficiently. This was well fulfilled with additional insights gained from William. It was also an invaluable occasion to understand my rooms for improvement through communicating with different people, including William, Kiana and other Talents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all whom I met during the three days. It was really a nice experience to meet different people in HKBN and be given various opportunities to try out new things and step out of my comfort zone.

HKBN, “wows” me!

Charles Chiu

10.12.2014

