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**Managing Editor** Sujith Vasudevan

**Editorial**  
Heena Kousar Keerthana Kantaraju  
Roopalatha H.

**Manager - Design**  
Prabhu Dutta A.R.N Ray

**Sr. Designer** Souvik Acharya  
**Visualizers** Tushar Das  
Mrigank Sharma

**VP - Sales & Marketing** Amrit Kumar Singh

**Noida**  
Rohit Raghubanshi Akshay Shetty  
advertise@ceoinsightsasia.com

**Editorial queries**  
editor@ceoinsightsasia.com

**Circulation Manager** Magendran Perumal

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to [subscription@ceoinsightsasia.com](mailto:subscription@ceoinsightsasia.com)

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## Editorial

# The Modern-Day Dimensions of Leadership

The adage, 'leaders are born, not made,' is increasingly becoming arguable in the modern-day context. Corporate leaders have their hands full with the major wedge of the workforce preferring hybrid work culture on one side and the dynamically growing technology landscape on the other. With Human behavior being a matrix already, the lack of spontaneous interactions— often via video conferencing—without a scheduled timing is also becoming a new territory for leaders in every department of an organization.

One of the keys to cracking leadership is mastering communication technologies and using them smartly. It would help if you also gave employees more responsibilities and decision-making power while making them accountable. Giving them a sense of ownership could go a long way in ensuring seamless delivery. But this takes a lot of scientific knowledge, and it's essential to undergo modern-day leadership training before stepping into the process.

On the other hand, the ridiculous pace of technology and the need to set your shop up in the digital world is a significant challenge faced by CEOs and leaders in the technology department. Subject matter expertise and knowledge are paramount when it comes to the digital transformation of a business. It's a no-brainer that aspirant leaders and even the established ones must undergo specialized training to keep their organizations abreast of the dynamic trends. We have curated a bunch of exciting stories from the corporate training and development realm.

Do let us know your thoughts.

Sujith Vasudevan  
Managing Editor  
[editor@ceoinsightsasia.com](mailto:editor@ceoinsightsasia.com)



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# CONTRIBUTORS

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# AZMAN SULAIMAN

HELPING TRANSFORM LEADERS  
FROM GOOD TO GREAT



# OMERS NAMES ASHISH GOYAL AS THE HEAD OF APAC OPERATIONS



**A**shish Goyal has been appointed executive vice president and regional director for Asia-Pacific by Canadian pension fund OMERS.

According to a statement from the business, Goyal's mandate is to oversee OMERS' regional strategic growth objectives across all of its asset classes, including the development of new connections and collaborations. Ralph Berg, the incoming chief investment officer, will get his report. On April 1st, Goyal and Berg would both start in their new positions.

Goyal joins OMERS in 2019 to oversee the capital markets division for the Asia-Pacific region. He has worked with top international asset managers out of offices in Singapore, Mumbai, and Hong Kong for more than three decades. Commenting on the appointment, Berg said, "Ashish has a wealth of investment, leadership and operational experience that will be invaluable to accelerating OMERS' ambitious growth plans in the Asia-Pacific region".

"It is a privilege to work every day on behalf of the more than 550,000 members of the OMERS pension plan. OMERS places great importance on

partnerships and collaborating with others to mutual benefit, and I look forward to further advancing our global relationships", Goyal said. Goyal created, supervised, and oversaw investment teams at renowned international asset managers with operations in Mumbai, Singapore, and Hong Kong prior to joining OMERS. He has been an investor for more than three decades, both in public and private markets.

He earned an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the College of Engineering in Pune. He is a certified financial analyst as well. He also works with the Financial Women's Association of Singapore as a mentor and 'Male Champion'. OMERS built an office in Sydney, Australia, in 2014, and one in Singapore in early 2018. 11 percent of OMERS' diversified, premium portfolio was put into the region as of December 31st, 2022. In addition to lending to borrowers in the top quartile and collaborating with like-minded co-investors to support the Asia growth story, OMERS intends to participate in the equity of best-in-class businesses. **C'**

# SRI LANKA CENTRAL BANK LIKELY TO UNCHANGE RATES NEXT WEEK AFTER 100 BPS HIKE EARLIER



At a policy meeting the following week, Sri Lanka's central bank is anticipated to leave interest rates steady, one month after a 100 basis point increase in anticipation of a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Even if it is trending downward, inflation is still slightly above 50 percent, and 2023 growth is projected to be three percent lower as the nation battles to recover from its worst financial crisis in more than seven decades. In its third policy rate decision of the year, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) is expected to hold rates, according to twelve out of the fourteen analysts and economists.

In order to control inflation, the central bank increased interest rates by a record 950 basis points in 2017 and by 100 bps on March 3rd. To reduce inflation, which reached 50.6 percent in February, and preserve investor confidence as it begins the challenging process of debt restructuring, analysts said Sri Lanka needs to maintain high interest rates. "Inflation needs

to come down to about 15 percent or below policy rates before they start lowering interest rates", said Shehan Cooray, head of research at Acuity Stockbrokers.

"Even with lower inflation, Sri Lanka will still have to keep interest rates quite high to maintain a cap on imports, manage reserves and bridge financing gaps over the next three years. Rates will not drop significantly this year". As per economists, any rate easing will probably take place in September or October, coinciding with central bank estimates that inflation will reach a single digit level at the beginning of the third quarter. Sri Lanka plans to finish restructuring a portion of its domestic debt by the end of May.

After the domestic debt operation, the financially precarious South Asian nation will also begin formal negotiations for the debt it owes to bilateral creditors and foreign bondholders. It plans to finish those parallel debt negotiations by September, in time for the first IMF review. **C'**

# UAE'S HOTPACK GLOBAL TO COMMENCE \$266 MILLION PACKAGING PROJECT IN SAUDI ARABIA



THE PROJECT'S GOAL IS TO PRODUCE A RANGE OF PACKAGING PRODUCTS, INCLUDING RECYCLABLE, BIODEGRADABLE, AND ECOLOGICALLY FRIENDLY OPTIONS

A Saudi Arabian initiative for specialised food packaging costing an estimated SR1 billion (\$266 million) is being planned by the UAE-based Hotpack Global in order to provide environmentally friendly goods. The Saudi Ministry of Industry and the Emirati maker of disposable food packaging goods have inked an agreement for the project, the business announced in a statement. The agreement will open the door for the development of one of the largest specialised food packaging projects in the Kingdom to date, to be stretched over a seven-year period.

The project's goal is to produce a range of packaging products, including recyclable, biodegradable, and ecologically friendly options. The action is part of a movement to lessen packaging waste, which is increasing annually throughout the world. In accordance with the agreement, the two parties will also cooperate to exploit specific agricultural waste kinds in an effort to turn it into one of the primary raw materials required for manufacturing and production inputs in the near future.

Khaled Al-Falih, the Saudi Arabian Minister of Investment, and Osama Al-Zamil, the Deputy Minister of Industry and Natural Resources, were both present when the deal was signed.

The agreement follows Hotpack's announcement in April of last year that it will spend 350 million dirhams (\$95.30 million) over ten years to construct up to ten biodegradable packaging plants in Malaysia. According to the business, the initiative will be carried out in collaboration with Malaysia's Free the Seed Sdn Bhd, which produces biodegradable goods from rice straw and is supported by Malaysian Bioeconomy Development Corp. Hotpack's first factory in Southeast Asia, will be in Malaysia.

The first 3,200 square metre production plant, which will be built next to Free the Seed's current building, is scheduled to go up in May 2022 and be finished in August 2022, according to the business. The initial factory is anticipated to create 70 million units of packaging for quickly moving consumer items per year. On the other hand, the Saudi Ministry of Investment wants to make the Kingdom one of the best-performing marketplaces for investments, which is why it reached the agreement with the Emirati producer of packing materials. To support sustained national economic growth, the ministry's purpose is to market Saudi Arabia as a top international investment location, draw in new capital, keep existing investors, and increase their investments. **C**

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# CYBERCRIMINALS: WHO ARE THEY & HOW DO THEY USE MALWARE?

By **Anthony Webb**, Vice President International, A10 Networks

Anthony is a highly motivated business leader with a high level of determination and proven ability to deliver vision and strategic direction. He has a significant 'C' level engagement spanning a 20 year sales career in the IT, Data Communications, and Telecom's industry.

## The Dangers of Cyber Criminals and Cyber Crime

Cyber criminals are usually motivated by financial gain, though other motivations can include desire for political influence, some concept of social justice, or just the malicious thrill of causing trouble for others. The threat of cyber crime is so widespread that in 2002, the US government designated an FBI division devoted to investigating cyber crime and prosecuting cyber criminals in both the US and abroad.

## How You Could Become the Target of a Malware Attack

Malware is one of the biggest threats to your network security. Short for 'malicious software', malware is a kind of program, written to infiltrate and access devices on your network to steal your data or sabotage your network. Cyber criminals use malware to steal financial data, intellectual property, personally identifiable data, and login credentials; to scramble or delete crucial operational data and code; to hijack elections and skew election results; or launch distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks.

It should be pretty clear that malware detection and removal of malware are essential for any organization that has confidential data. While there are various kinds of malware, the schemes involving ransomware and data exfiltration are especially prevalent and disruptive.

## How to Prevent Ransomware and its Costs

Ransomware is a kind of malware that attempts to extort payment from the victim of the attack. The ransomware program breaches your network firewall, then accesses and encrypts your data so it's no longer readable or usable by your company. To view your data once again, you would need a decryptor key, a program that unscrambles your data

so it's usable once again. Of course, there's a price to pay for the decryptor key, in the form of a ransom demanded by the cyber criminal. To make the payment untraceable and the cyber attacker anonymous, the ransom payment is demanded in bitcoin.

Unfortunately, some companies have paid ransoms because they had no other recourse but it's extremely risky to negotiate with cyber criminals. For one thing, paying a ransom doesn't guarantee that the cyber criminals will give you a decryptor key that actually works or that the ransomware will subsequently be removed from your network. In addition, you remain susceptible to further attacks and demands for ransom payment by the same cyber attacker or others. To avoid this disastrous scenario, you need to deal with the problem of how to prevent ransomware attacks in the first place.



**Anthony Webb**  
Vice President International

### **Cyber Criminals & the Threat of Data Exfiltration**

Data exfiltration is the unauthorized export of your confidential data, content, and code by unauthorized users. This export can occur accidentally or be orchestrated by a cyber criminal working either

inside or outside your company. The data that is stolen could include user login credentials, intellectual property, confidential sales or financial information, business plans, and so much more.

“**THE DATA STORED ON A COMPANY'S NETWORKED DEVICES AND REPOSITORIES ARE EXTREMELY VALUABLE. THEREFORE, EVEN A SINGLE DATA EXFILTRATION HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DERAIL A COMPANY'S OPERATIONS AND EVEN PUT IT OUT OF BUSINESS**

The methods cyber criminals use to exfiltrate data are equally numerous. One of the most common ways of gaining unauthorized data access is email phishing. Phishing emails contain links or executable code—malware—that can hijack a user's identity and access to sensitive data. Given the sheer volume of emails, including spam that users routinely deal with, phishing emails can be significant vectors for data exfiltration attacks.

The data stored on a company's networked devices and repositories are extremely valuable. Therefore, even a single data exfiltration has the potential to derail a company's operations and even put it out of business. In fact, a recent article on The Hacker News posited that data exfiltration may now be a greater threat than ransomware. That's why it's critical for companies to have visibility into their network traffic, so they can inspect activity, look for patterns that might indicate a security breach, eliminate threats, and allow only trusted traffic and activities in their network. If you're charged with preventing data exfiltration, you'll need to implement a Zero Trust model of cyber security.

### **The Value of Malware Detection & the Zero Trust Model**

To maintain your network and data integrity, you need to adopt a Zero Trust model. This model assumes that any person or device accessing your network must have their identity and access level verified; they won't gain access just based on trust. Security protocols based on a Zero Trust model will continuously monitor your network for external and internal threats, secure your network perimeter, constantly monitor for cyber security breaches, and neutralize threats. The Zero Trust model ensures every user and access point is authorized to be on your network using strict authentication procedures. This technology builds in malware detection to prevent data exfiltration, deliver ransomware protection, and remove malware itself. **C'**

# AZMAN SULAIMAN

## HELPING TRANSFORM LEADERS FROM GOOD TO GREAT

By Manish Kumar

**T**he professional training and coaching industry in Malaysia has been growing rapidly in recent years as many individuals and companies recognize the importance of developing their leaders with even greater leadership abilities beyond classroom teaching. Azman Sulaiman, the founder of ICOACHKL, is a prominent figure in this industry. With more than 35 years of cross-industry corporate and consulting experience, Azman is able to draw on this knowledge to complement his executive coaching practice. His private executive coaching practice focuses on C-Suite executive coaching at the very top for aspiring young leaders who are looking to move up the corporate ladder. Through his coaching, Azman aims to help individuals unlock their potential and achieve their personal and professional goals. Let's dive in and learn more about his journey.

### **Give a brief account of your professional journey.**

I'm a graduate of the University of Malaya. I then read for a post-graduate degree from the University of Strathclyde and later an MBA from the Australian National University. Additionally, I am an alumnus of the Harvard SMDP program and a Certified Professional Coach by ICF. Throughout my career, I have gained experience in various technical & corporate roles both in Malaysia and abroad. I believe that furthering my qualifications has been part and parcel of what I refer to as my 'One-Thousand Day Itch'. In reflection every three years or so, I've either progressed to a new role or returned to school to improve my qualifications. I started my career as a field Engineer, working on major infrastructure projects in Malaysia and overseas. I moved up the ranks from technical roles to leadership roles and eventually assumed senior leadership & CEO roles in subsidiaries of UEM Group. After 20 years with UEM Group, I spent nearly 10 years with Korn Ferry International eventually retiring as a Senior Partner. I found that Executive Coaching was my next calling and gained professional credentials before establishing ICOACHKL in 2019. Complementing my time in retirement from full-time employment, I also currently serve on the boards of PLC and private companies. As a Faculty Member of the Institute of Corporate Directors Malaysia (ICDM) I also advise PLC Boards on Enhancing Board Effectiveness.



**WHILE I MAY NOT ALWAYS HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS MYSELF, I AM FORTUNATE TO TAKE AN APPROACH TO PROBLEM-SOLVING THAT INVOLVES EMPOWERING OTHERS TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR EXPERTISE AND INSIGHTS**

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COVER STORY





**Azman Sulaiman, Founder**

**Azman** is certified by the International Coach Federation (ICF) USA and is credentialed as a Certified Master Coach, CMC. He established ICOACHKL as a private coaching practice focusing on C-suite executive coaching to CEOs as well as aspiring young leaders moving up the corporate ladder.

**What is the mantra for your success? Also, explain your leadership style.**

Reflecting on my career, I've come to the realization that my leadership style has been anchored on people engagement. Whether it was working through technical challenges with the engineering team or addressing corporate matters, my approach has always been centered on effective engagement with others in order to resolve issues. Ultimately, I believe that everything comes down to people. While I may not always have all the answers, I have developed an approach to problem-solving that involves empowering others to contribute their expertise and insights.



**Define ICOACHKL as an organization and its position in the market.**

While with Korn Ferry, I became known as a trusted confidante to clients and colleagues alike. This has helped anchor the positioning of ICOACHKL as a premier Executive Coaching practice for C-Suite leaders. The firm not only offers individual executive coaching but also coaching senior leadership teams looking to strategize and navigate business direction and growth.

**What factors do you consider while creating successful company growth strategies?**

In my opinion, there are three crucial elements for developing successful corporate growth strategies. The first is Clarity of Understanding. How well do we understand what exactly do we want to be? How much do we believe we can get there? The second is the Alignment of Aspirations. Now that we understand the 'what' and collectively believe we can get there, how do we plan to get there? Finally, the third step is Awareness & Ownership. It is good to have nice plans, but now who does what? How does every member take ownership and be accountable for what they are tasked to do?

**What industry best practices have you included in the products and services offered by the company?**

I believe that trust is a crucial best practice that I bring to the table. Drawing from my experience in infrastructure development, for example, the focus was always on delivering quality projects on time and within budget. It was ingrained in us to be

trustworthy and committed to delivering results, while also steering clear of corrupt practices. Essentially, it's important to never engage in actions that we may later regret.

Another best practice is being able to see the big picture and not be drawn too much into minute details. Some term it as 'Missing the Forest for the Trees'. My cross-industry experience helps to see trends, 'take high ground' and be more comfortable in supporting those whom we are serving.



### **What is your anticipation regarding future market changes and what is your advice to CEOs of companies moving forward?**

The future is all about speed. Speed of awareness as well as speed to react. Whether it is in terms of adapting to new technologies, reacting to shifts in the market, or delivering on expectations with speed. To address this, leaders need to remain agile and flexible in their approach, adapting to the changing landscape. For instance, coaching is not necessarily limited to physical one-on-one interactions, as the pandemic has demonstrated the effectiveness of virtual engagement. Even as an Executive Coach, I can't afford to be rigid and stick to old processes, when the market and expectations expect me to respond differently. I've even learned the skill of coaching via text messaging, to help with real-time coaching rather than being rigid in relying purely on formal appointments.

Whilst speed is important, I also encourage leaders make greater effort to listen. Coaches refer to this as "active listening". Not just hearing with your ears, but also observing emotions, motivations and values underlying what you hear. This may require more time and effort, but it helps decision making.

- **Hobbies:** I'm an avid fan of sports and the outdoors. I was a keen athlete and played competitive rugby and tennis. Today it's mainly golf. I've also had my fair share of outdoor hiking and mountain climbing. With childhood friends of St John's Institution, in 2016 we scaled to the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa.
- **Favorite Cuisine:** Penang Char Kuay Teow
- **Favorite Books:** I love reading autobiographies. Among my favorites are 'When the Moon Split - An Autobiography of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH'; 'My Autobiography - Sir Alex Ferguson and more recently, "Seeking a Life Balance - Elm Edge'
- **Favorite Travel Destinations:** Scotland, Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah

### **What is your advice to upcoming leaders in this domain?**

As a coach with years of experience in leadership development, I strongly recommend that leaders, particularly those aspiring leaders, adopt a mindset of patience yet be fearless when it comes to trying new things. In today's rapidly changing business landscape, leaders must be willing to take risks and think outside the box to remain relevant and competitive.

One of the biggest misconceptions about leadership is that it is only about maintaining the status quo and preserving the existing way of doing things. However, I believe that true leaders are also innovators who are willing to challenge conventional wisdom and blaze new trails toward success.

As a coach, my role is to help my clients develop the confidence and courage to take those necessary steps toward growth and success. Through personalized coaching sessions, I challenge my clients to think critically and creatively, and I provide them with the support and guidance they need to overcome their fears and take action. In today's fast-paced business environment, leaders who embrace patience yet be fearless and who are willing to take calculated risks, can achieve extraordinary results. I am committed to helping my clients navigate these challenges and realize their full potential as leaders. **C!**

# TRANSFORMING DIGITAL PROCESS AUTOMATION DURING NEW NORMAL

By **Dr. Kaushik Sengupta**, Product Head – Food SAR Region, Bureau Veritas Group

With 19+ years' experience in the verticals like audit, certification, training, quality functions, Dr. Kaushik is increasing the digital process automation valuation.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of IT and digital transformation across industries and businesses are utilizing this time to speed up the transition. Pandemic gives significant changes in industries especially in technology, food delivery services, customer service, and virtual events. Research found during new normal inability to visit customers, there is a tremendous decline in sales performance, and the inability to resume production as the top negative impacts of COVID-19 on enterprise-level. On the other hand, it create a bridge with new normal and enhance ability of corporate houses for a collaboration with information and technology platform, which creates wide recognition of the value of digital transformation and information technology among all employees, and the ability to market online and business development were the top positive impact.

Many companies have a digital transformation initiative in its place, but a true digital transformation always starts with a strategic mind-set towards transformation, digital culture and provides an effective customer experience. Many time companies runs in silos with disconnected or under-connected business functions and lacks driving force behind technology and decision-making ability. Customer



**Dr. Kaushik Sengupta**  
Product Head - Food SAR Region

expectations are not static and will continue to evolve with people counting on their bank to cater for them every step of the way, from mobile-first offerings and the secure handling of sensitive data, to swift and seamless processes.

There's a lot of talk about intelligent automation, certainly. It represents a more advanced form of what is commonly known as robotic process automation. Any set of large-scale activities or groups of repetitive tasks that draw on or feed information to multiple systems are candidates for intelligent automation.

Intelligent automation is critical to a successful digital transformation, but the two terms aren't interchangeable. Digital Transformation is bigger than the sum of its parts and essential to it is intelligent automation, which must include the following six components to be considered successful as it has Front-end digitization, Extraction and automation, Process discovery and documentation, Straight-through-processing, Analytics and Change management.

Digital transformation goes by a lot of names like 'Digital Process Automation', Analyst call it 'Digital Operations' or 'intelligent Business Process Management System'. And some as just 'Process Automaton.' The executives surveyed believe that working from home will outlast the pandemic and



continue well into the future. Some 64 percent of their employees are working primarily from home now, a nine-fold jump from the number prior to the pandemic. Companies giving their employees a computer and an Internet connection but keeping them productive, secure, and working in agile teams from home is more challenging. In fact, the most common areas of increased technology investment serve to boost the efficiency and safety of remote work.

One technique successful companies use to create the right alignment and partnership for digital is to think about new opportunities from the customer's perspective. A key part of the focus should be on digital leadership that include a drive to create appropriate learning forums for employees across the organization. If organization is not sure where to start their digital education efforts, a good place might be with analytics training. While social, mobile, and cloud get a lot of attention, when it comes to gaps in digital acumen, it's all about the data. As per a study by HBS Close to three-quarters (73 percent) rated analytics as extremely important to their area of the business (8-10 on a 10-point scale), with another 17

percent rating it as important (6-7). But only a fifth (20 percent) rated their own knowledge and skills in this area highly.

### **The Foundation**

Even before the pandemic technological progress were especially salient. Technology was disrupting production processes, especially through the rapid scale-up of digital platforms. Digital technology has been challenging with traditional boundaries with changing global value chains and the geography of jobs. After all, technology decreases the costs of doing business, complementing investments in infrastructure, free trade agreements, and other liberalization efforts to reduce trade barriers, which in turn expands global value chains and changes the geography of jobs. New business models — digital platform firms — have been able to evolve rapidly from local start-ups to global behemoths, often with few employees or tangible assets. Digital platforms have enabled clusters of businesses to form in underdeveloped rural areas.

Technology created quivering shifts in all skills required to succeed in the labor market. While

returns to routine, job-specific skills are declining, the premium for skills that cannot be replaced by robots has been increasing; these include cognitive skills such as critical thinking, as well as socio-behavioural skills such as managing and recognizing emotions that enhance teamwork. Earnings are higher for those who have a combination of these skills. HBS study indicates the evolving world of work demands adaptable skills that enable workers to transfer more easily from one task to another. Since 2001, the share of employment in occupations intensive in non-routine cognitive and socio-behavioural skills has increased from 19 percent to 23 percent in emerging economies, and from 33 percent to 41 percent in advanced economies.



**MANY COMPANIES  
HAVE A DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION  
INITIATIVE IN ITS PLACE,  
BUT A TRUE DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION ALWAYS  
STARTS WITH A STRATEGIC  
MIND-SET TOWARDS  
TRANSFORMATION,  
DIGITAL CULTURE AND  
PROVIDES AN EFFECTIVE  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

#### **What Changes required in New Normal**

Pandemic will reinforce these pre-existing trends and increase the urgency of corresponding policy responses. As evident Amazon and Alibaba getting even bigger and stronger as brick-and-mortar stores are unable to compete. Companies will invest more in their ability to conduct business over the internet

to be more resilient to potential lockdowns. Some temporary jobs will also continue to grow. Firms may also have more incentive to invest in automation and restore production to shield against value chain disruption. Many businesses relying on imported inputs are facing lack of intermediate goods as value chains are disrupted. They may need to ensure that supplies are less vulnerable to travel restrictions. Digital technology is also improving people's ability to work from home, although the amenability to remote work — which depends on the type of jobs and tasks to be done, as well as digital capacity — varies significantly across and within countries.

#### **Policies to Upgrade**

The rapid spread of technology accelerated by the pandemic has led to a pressing need for businesses and governments to adapt. Many businesses, especially in developing economies, are digitally disconnected. They may not have access to workers with the right skills and face challenging business environments.

Governments have an arsenal of policy options at their disposal, from incentives and regulations to infrastructure projects and taxation. Key priorities should be: 1) Ramping up investment in human capital (knowledge, skills, and health) and lifelong learning if workers are to adapt to future labor markets; 2) Strengthening social protections, expanding safety net coverage, and reforming financing arrangements and labor market norms to facilitate work transitions and to reduce disincentives to the creation of formal jobs; 3) Ensuring affordable access to the internet while adapting regulations to confront the challenges posed by digital platforms (such as data privacy and protection and competition rules); and 4) Upgrading taxation systems to address tax avoidance and to create fiscal space for universal social protection and human capital development.

So the new normal continues to evolve. Nonetheless, it clearly is here to stay, as are new technology solutions that make it possible. Even after the pandemic ends, the use of these technologies will expand beyond the pandemic response, and, if anything, will become even more widespread. Therefore, it is important for all levels of government to develop an approach that makes for not only a more technologically savvy future but one that is secure for both employers and employees. **C'**

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# **CEO** *Insights Asia* **TOP 10** **LEADERS IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & COACHING IN MALAYSIA - 2023**

## **Malaysian Leaders in Professional Coaching Shaping More Professionals**

Organizations across industries have experienced pragmatic disruption in recent time as COVID has spawned numerous challenges around supply chain, labor shortages, inflation, cybersecurity threats and what not. It also promoted the adoption and rapid expansion of remote work. This ever-shifting work-culture and changing business landscape have posed many challenges to both the business and business leaders. Many struggled to maintain momentum while some of them thrived with strong and steady leadership. Hence, leadership is not only about having ever-increasing followers but a much broader concept than this. While great leadership can have a great effect on business' bottom line, poor leadership can be equally damaging. However, leaders can hone their skills and habits on their own, to expedite progress and help other leaders deliver organizational growth executive coaches slips into the frame.

## **Building Joyful & Effective Leaders**

The professional training and coaching industry in Malaysia has been growing exponentially in recent years with more and more individuals and organization recognizing the importance of

developing their leaders with even greater leadership potential beyond classroom teaching. Which is why, the Malaysian market is currently witnessing a stiff growth in professional training and coaching industry with numerous industry players diving into the sector. These coaches being committed to personal development as well as professional development fosters professional and personal development and also brings in success. With a coaching process that is collaborative, customized, dynamic, and most importantly client-driven they help executives build leadership skills, create career plans, enumerate personal beliefs, and identify short-and long-term career goals. Additionally, they mold leaders into self-reflective, emotionally intelligent, and resilient for both joyful and effective outcomes that drive positive change not only for organizations but for the country as a whole.

In this issue of the **CEO Insights Asia** magazine, a list of '**Top 10 Leaders in Professional Training & Coaching in Malaysia - 2023**' is provided to the readers in corporate and different sectors, for informing on the excellent services leveraged by the Leaders in diverse domains. The listing is prepared by a team of industry veterans, CEOs and VCs, and the CEO Insights magazine editorial board.

# TOP 10 LEADERS IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & COACHING IN MALAYSIA - 2023

MANAGEMENT	COMPANY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Anita Lawrence</b> Founder	<b>Exceed Excellence Sdn Bhd</b> Kuala Lumpur exceed-excellence.com	A leadership consultant & trainer working with different leaders proving the importance of leadership and offering steadiness and perseverance
<b>Azman Sulaiman</b> Founder	<b>ICOACHKL</b> Kuala Lumpur iCoachKL.com	An aspiring young leader with more than 35 years of cross-industry corporate and consulting experience, focusing on C-Suite executive coaching at the very top for aspiring young leaders who are looking to move up the corporate ladder
<b>Jason Gan</b> Founder	<b>Tribeup Academy</b> Petaling tribeupacademy.com	A certified trainer, business coach with expertise in digital marketing, social media marketing, facebook advertising, and more
<b>Mac Foong</b> Founder	<b>Goldman Seeds</b> Bandar Kinrara goldmanseeds.com	An expert options trader with in-depth knowledge of markets and how current events affect equities and options, directing and boosting growth in small and medium-sized businesses
<b>Melanie Aloysius</b> CEO	<b>People Potential</b> Kuala Lumpur peoplepotential.com	An experienced head of sales with a demonstrated history of working in the IT industry and recently with the learning and development industry
<b>Raymond Phoon</b> Managing Partner	<b>PowerUpSuccess Group</b> Petaling Jaya powerupsuccess.com	A keynote speaker & business transformation expert with an extensive background in the areas of sales, marketing, leadership & business within the technology, financial services, FMCG industries across the globe
<b>Shan Li Tay</b> Managing Partner	<b>ScaleUp Malaysia</b> Kuala Lumpur scaleup.my	A qualified chartered accountant (ICAEW) having over 12 years of experience within various banking functions including corporate finance, investment banking, corporate strategy as well as marketing and communications
<b>Shen Feng Yong</b> Co-Founder	<b>Communications Leadership Academy</b> Petaling Jaya commsleadership.com	A strong business development professional with a demonstrated history of working in the computer networking industry, skilled in nonprofit organizations, microsoft word, coaching, sales and event management
<b>Dr. Wendy Lee</b> Founder	<b>Chapter One Asia</b> Shah Alam chap-one.com	An inspiring speaker and brand image consultant training corporate executives, helping them define and refine their brand and image through their appearance, behavior and communication
<b>Zainuddin Manan</b> Founder & CEO	<b>Optimal Systems Engineering Malaysia</b> Johor optimalsystems.my	A social entrepreneur and a global expert in energy resource sustainability, creating a society practicing sustainable consumption and production

# MAC FOONG

MASTERING THE MARKET WITH  
SKILLS & EXPERTISE

**M**any of us have the misconception that anyone could become a trader or investor in the stock market; however, becoming an excellent stock market trader needs far more than just some investment capital and a three-piece suit. The major factor separating a professional who is profitable from a trader who is losing money is the acquisition of essential trading skills. To fill the gap Mac comes with a platform called Goldman Seeds, a Malaysia based financial firm that offers trading education.

Mac has over seven years of experience as a results-driven chief executive officer, directing and boosting growth in small and medium-sized businesses. He is an expert options trader with in-depth knowledge of markets and how current events affect equities and options. He has a solid grasp of fluctuations and applies thorough analysis to decide when to place buy and sell orders. Let's learn more from him in below interview snippets.

**Could you briefly explain your educational background and career experience? What motivated you to create Goldman Seeds, and what motivates you now?**

You know despite having a limited formal education, my tenacity, unwavering faith, and persistence have allowed me to establish a successful business. Through real-world experience and ongoing education, I have gradually improved my talents. I have five years of experience as the CEO of a listed group's subsidiary, which has provided me with valuable insights into the inner workings of a successful company.

Do Good, Become Educated, Get Intellect, and Be Rich are the four guiding principles that form the foundation of our business. Our goal to teach and share knowledge is driven by these values. We want to have a positive impact on the community at large in addition to our clients by teaching and promoting these values.



**Tell us about Goldman Seeds and its current position in the market? What is the special offer that your company makes to customers?**

Goldman Seeds is situated at the center of the financial market. In order to give consumers and students a wide range of financial products and options to experience the essence of finance, as well as professional guidance and recommendations for maximizing value. It is our mission to continuously expand and enrich the entire ecosystem. With more than 2000 students, we launched a variety of fundamental and strategy courses at three different levels, from beginner to expert. We want to provide a financially secure environment where everything we do upholds our commitment to integrity.

Our unique selling point would be 'Honesty is the foundation, Talk the Talk, Walk the Walk' which underscores this commitment.

**Tell us about the tools and methodologies your company uses to ensure that students have better learning experiences.**

We have a variety of programs in place, such as the 'Weekly Macroeconomics and US market Trend

**Mac Foong**  
**Founder**  
**Goldman Seeds**

Mac Foong is a result-driven chief CEO possessing 7+ years of experience leading and increasing growth in small and medium businesses. Strong ability to solve complex company problems using excellent judgment and decision-making skills. He is a highly skilled Option Market Trader and has extensive knowledge of markets and how stocks and options are influenced by current events. He also has a strong understanding of fluctuations and engages in careful analysis to determine placing buy and selling orders.

**QUICK FACTS:**

- **Hobbies:** Learning New Market Trends & Business models
- **Favorite Cuisine:** Traditional home-style dishes especially cooked by my mother that would bring back memories.
- **Favorite Book:** Philosophy books related to Yin & Yang, Capital, I Ching
- **Favorite Travel Destination:** All over the world, but the most beloved is still 'Home'

**Awards & Recognition**

- Awarded FinTech Certificate from UM (University of Malaya)
- Malaysia PP-PPD Appointed Trainer
- Professional Certificate of Coaching in US Financial Market

Analysis' discussion and the Live Trading Courses, which are, in my opinion, the fastest and most effective ways for students to progress quickly. These programs give students in-depth knowledge of the US economy's recent history and most recent trends. Students' ability to completely comprehend the concepts and apply them in practical settings is made possible by the mix of theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. This accelerates their progress and strengthens their skills as they navigate the financial markets. Also, we have a Discord group where we publish daily news on the stock market, the worldwide market, and market analysis so that students may stay up to date on the state of the economy.

**Could you describe your leadership style and the rules or procedures you adopt to manage your team?**

The ancient Chinese ancestors left us a valuable leadership legacy known as 'Fang and Yuan'. This philosophy has become the cornerstone of my leadership approach to my team, emphasizing the importance of balancing assertiveness with adaptability. Being at the forefront and continuously observing changes in the environment are crucial components of this philosophy, enabling leaders to turn situations to their advantage. Effective leadership under this philosophy requires strategic thinking, a clear vision, and quick reactions to stay ahead in ever-changing circumstances. By embracing this philosophy, we can leverage our unique strengths and create a roadmap for success in any situation. These leadership qualities can also be passed on to our team, fostering the development of future leaders. By adopting the 'Fang and Yuan' philosophy, we can build a strong and adaptable team that can navigate the complex and rapidly changing business landscape.

**What changes in consumer behavior are you expecting in the future, and what opportunities do you see?**

The consumer market will undoubtedly develop as a result of a number of variables, including increased technology use, a focus on sustainability, the expansion of new markets, and increased volatility. Our education in trading and investing will also be improved and organized as a result of these changes to better meet the changing needs of the market. We currently have a system of algorithms that can automatically trade in the future market and deliver respectable outcomes based on a three-year backtest.

**What guidance would you offer to aspiring business executives considering your success?**

Well, I have a few principles that I want to emphasize. First, stay current. The market is always changing, so it's critical to keep up with the most recent trends. Put a focus on risk management next. Profits are the ultimate goal of trading and investing, thus it's critical to stress the significance of risk management and good risk management techniques. Third, act morally. As the financial sector has a bad reputation for unethical activity, it's crucial to stress the value of ethics and set a good example. **C!**

# ZAINUDDIN MANAN

*WORKING WITH A VISION TO  
CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE  
BETTERMENT OF THE SOCIETY*

**W**ith the world moving towards more and more development, there is also a sudden need to look after a sustainable way of work to keep the environment safe and reduce the impact of climate change. With the vision to build resilience and sustainability in people and culture, Zainuddin Manan established Optimal Systems Engineering to create a society practicing sustainable consumption and production. The company provides consultancy services, conducts professional training, and develops cutting-edge process integration and smart systems engineering technologies and solutions to enable organizations to achieve multiple bottom-line benefits of reduced costs of energy, water, power, and resources, ultimately improving efficiency and sustainability.

Zainuddin Manan has completed his B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Houston and later completed his Master of Science in Process Integration from the University of Manchester. He has also pursued his Doctorate in Chemical Engineering from the University of Edinburgh. He started his career as a young engineer at PETRONAS and Hong Leong Industries but after some time he realized that as an engineer, the work started feeling like routine and predictable. So, early during his career, he explored a job prospect with the chance to create, innovate & educate, and explore & experiment. His quest led him to become an academician and within one year of joining academia, he managed to propel his way to the international stage to pursue his passion by doing postgraduate study abroad in energy and resource sustainability.



Zainuddin engages in an exclusive interaction with the CEO Insights Asia Magazine. Let's hear from him.

## **What inspired you to establish Optimal Systems Engineering and what drives you today?**

As a strong advocate of sustainability, I founded the Process Systems Engineering Centre (PROSPECT) as an academia at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) to develop cutting-edge solutions for energy and resource sustainability. Within a few years, UTM-PROSPECT was ranked 1st globally in the distinguished competency of water, costs, and optimization by Elsevier and later ranked 1st globally in the competency of heat exchanger, retrofitting, and design. The stream of global recognition led me to establish Optimal Systems Engineering (OPTIMISE) as the UTM spin-off company to commercialize our solutions as a package of products, services, and training programs. So, here I am waking up as an international educator/coach, entrepreneur, industrial practitioner, and changemaker with OPTIMISE.

**Zainuddin Manan**  
**Founder & CEO**  
**Optimal Systems Engineering Malaysia**

An educator, entrepreneur, industrial practitioner, researcher, and academician, Zainuddin is often approached by aspiring young leaders for advice. He has founded Optimal Systems Engineering and possesses professional experience of over three decades in sustainability.

**QUICK FACTS:**

- **Hobbies:** Nature-walking/traveling, learning about motivation, and investment
- **Favorite Cuisine:** Fish-Head Curry
- **Favorite Book:** Rich-Dad, Poor-Dad by Robert Kiyosaki
- **Favorite Travel Destination:** Scottish Highlands and the UK

**Awards & Recognition**

- Global Top 2 percent Scientists by Stanford Research (Lifetime Achievement).
- Global Top 2 percent Scientists by Stanford Research (2022 Achievement).
- Innovative Curriculum Award by Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. 2018.
- Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> globally by Elsevier in Emerging Competency of Heat Exchanger, Retrofitting, Design, 2014.
- Top Research Scientist Malaysia by Academy of Sciences Malaysia 2013.
- Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> globally by Elsevier in the Competency of Distinguished Competency of Water, Costs and Optimization, 2012.

**How would you define Optimal Systems Engineering as an organization and its current position in the market?**

OPTIMISE is a leading provider of cutting-edge sustainable systems engineering solutions in ASEAN. It specializes in providing training, consultancy, and smart system solutions in sustainable engineering and optimization of industrial processes and building facilities, and in sustainable enterprise planning and management. We guide organizations towards achieving multiple bottom-line benefits of improved profitability and governance, energy, resource, and environmental sustainability.

**Tell us about your offerings. What are the value additions that clients can expect from your offerings?**

OPTIMISE's signature training programs comprise award-winning proprietary technologies, solutions, and products that are backed by world-class, internationally validated, and referenced research in sustainable systems engineering to build competitive edges in organizations.

OPTIMISE's proven track records of over 30 years of mentoring, coaching, and providing consultancy services to over 500 organizations enable its clients to deliver performance, embrace sustainability and build resilience in their people, culture, process, and systems. Our cutting-edge technologies, solutions, and programs have been used in building facilities and numerous industries including oil and gas, petrochemical, power generation, food and beverages, oleochemical, palm oil, chloral-kali, pulp and paper, medical glove, and semiconductors.

**Could you tell us about Optimal Systems Engineering's approach toward sustainability? How are you up-skilling the participants?**

We call our approach the Global Cafe Hi-5 (High-impact-Sustainability) for widening access to our quality offerings. Hi-1 is our mission to produce competent, future-ready energy sustainability changemakers through our unique recipe. Hi-2 is our customized and personalized recipes for organizations and professionals. Hi-3 are our great chefs, who are certified and competent pros to deliver our innovative recipes. Hi-4 is our uberized delivery via technology and partnership to enable access to anyone from anywhere at any time. Hi-5 is our data-driven quality control, monitoring, and improvement that leverages digital technology, analytics, and platforms. **C'**

# TECHNOLOGY KEY TO GLOBAL TRAVEL RECOVERY

By **Benjamin Boesch**, Chief Digital Officer, VFS Global

Benjamin boasts of a 16-year long career during which he has handled key responsibilities across companies such as Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, Kuoni Group, and Jumeirah Group, and even co-founded a company named Joixes, prior to joining VFS in 2019.



Benjamin Boesch  
Chief Digital Officer

**T**he world is on the move again. After months of closures, the revival of various sectors is evident; re-opening of universities, hybrid working models, and high-profile international events are back on the calendar. While these are all signs of recovery, the travel industry, like many other consumer-facing businesses, remains exposed to vulnerabilities and uncertainties.

The challenge for governments and key stakeholders in the travel industry is not just to restore travel security, but to ensure the resilience of the industry for similar crises in the future and to respond to new customer needs and preferences that have emerged in recent months. This is where digital technology has become one of the key elements. With the right use of technology, people, and processes, businesses can create new possibilities and revenue streams, paving way for digital transformation. Prior to the pandemic, it was largely IT companies that pushed innovation to market. However, post-pandemic, the tables have turned, and businesses now face higher customer expectations. These expectations are related to connectivity, content,

and transactions in the travel industry. Any travel company that concentrates on these three factors will succeed, while those that ignore them will suffer reputational harm or lose consumers quietly and gradually. While other advances such as augmented reality or personalized services may be beneficial, but they lack credibility until the fundamentals are in place. According to World Economic Forum's Digital Transformation Initiative (DTI), digitalization in aviation, travel, and tourism between 2016 and 2025 will generate up to \$305 billion in value for the industry through increased profitability. Furthermore, while discussing digital transformation in travel, we must also be careful to not make the mistake of oversimplification. Digitization of the tourism industry is not just limited to bookings or the use of the internet to search for locations and flights, but to the entire experience itself, right from the beginning to end, every step being modified adds convenience for travelers.

People are willing, but cautious when it comes to planning vacations. Likewise, governments are willing to open borders and allow cross-border



*MACHINE LEARNING  
BASED ON CUSTOMER  
INFORMATION AND  
SUBSEQUENT ANALYSIS  
HELPS IN DELIVERING  
MORE PERSONALIZED AND  
VOICE-OF-CUSTOMER  
PROPOSITIONS*

mobility, but significant restrictions remain. Given these obstacles, the first step towards restoration is to build trust. Digital technology is a great tool to address both concerns. Digital products and services which offer a contactless experience throughout much of the customer journey encourage people to travel safely. Many companies across the travel industry are developing and adopting new technologies to make that contact minimal or non-existent in most processes. For example, VFS Global developed the Visa at your Doorstep (VAYD) service, a key milestone in this context, as it allows customers to apply for visas for travel to countries that require them from the comfort of their couch. Even critical information such as biometric enrolment can be provided from anywhere. This helps drive self-service through technology, which has a very positive impact on the customer journey.

In addition, technology also gives us a greater ability to assess the quality and efficiency of processes. Machine Learning based on customer information and subsequent analysis helps in delivering more personalized and voice-of-customer propositions. This stands relevant in the wake of

the pandemic, where new benchmarks have been set in digital customer experiences, given rapidly evolving preferences, and increasing demand for personalized services. With the addition of millions of new internet users by 2021, the challenge for digital solution providers is to keep pace with the rapidly changing needs of this demanding set of digital customers.

Nonetheless, we must not forget that even though digital technology has made our travel journeys convenient, it comes with its share of security dangers and privacy breaches. Given the rapid rate at which businesses have had to modernize their services to go digital, combined with the massive amount of personal data now housed in the cloud, it's no surprise that data security was not the most well-designed and fool-proof cog in the machine. Hence, while being wary of the motivations behind the convenience offered online, fact-checking information from multiple sources for yourself and seeking expert opinion to question even marginally suspicious digital activity will all go a long way towards ensuring one's data security during these trying times. **C'**

# THREE WAYS INVESTING IN ROUTE PLANNING SOFTWARE IS BENEFICIAL FOR THE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

By **Mradul K.**, VP - Global Sales & Strategy, LogiNext

Mradul boasts of a 13-year long career during which he has been associated with companies such as Bajaj Alliance General Insurance, IFFCO Tokyo General Insurance, BlueOcean Systems, and many others, and has even worked as a Mentor of Change with the Indian Government's Atal Innovation Mission.



**Mradul K.**  
VP - Global Sales & Strategy

**T**raditionally, logistics management has typically been a process that has been handled manually, or on separate pieces of software. Despite being a process that handles scale-fleets numbering in hundreds, delivering shipments which weigh thousands of kilograms and handling multiple truck heads at one go, for the longest time, automation in the sector was practically unheard of. But all this is set to change with automation coming into the picture in recent years. At the start of 2020, a large European FMCG firm sought to automate its delivery management software. By the end of the year, the company found itself 43 percent more efficient in terms of the 'time' parameter in terms of its logistics operations.

A large part of the company's success can be attributed to the use of scheduling and delivery routing capabilities on top of the fundamental field service management software for transportation. With a thorough understanding of the situation, the company was able to benefit from new age solutions that centered on technology frameworks, leading to the rise in operational efficiency.

This understanding has been developed on the basis of a customer requirement management flowchart developed at McKinsey that touches upon the challenges and demands a customer has during their business journey. Besides allowing logistics management companies to gain insights into the company's requirements, there are three key features to keep in mind that will enable greater efficiency in operations:

## 1. Linehaul Express Tracking: Complete Visibility of Vehicle Type & Beyond

An often overlooked factor when it comes to transportation of goods is the nature of the vehicle. When handling sensitive goods, more often than not, they require a certain type of vehicle with certain

specifications. Using Linehaul express tracking, customers can avail complete visibility right down to granular details of the trucks, even if you are a 3PL provider.

## 2. Field Workforce Management

One of the biggest challenges in the global logistics space is the shortage of manpower. Due to this, overworking and tiredness is one of the major causes of road accidents by drivers. To address this concern, automation solutions step-in to handle all field workforce management needs – be it fleet management in cases such as the CEP (Courier Express and Parcel) industry or be it last mile delivery in QSR (Quick Service Restaurant) scenarios.

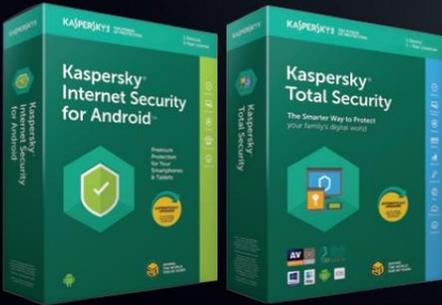
## 3. Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning in a Transportation Management System

As technology permeates into every sector and operation imaginable, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are transforming transport management. Through this, it is now possible to track billions of location data points annually, which in turn help algorithms become smarter to bring about increased efficiency to supply chains.

Moving forward, as we prepare to enter a post-pandemic world, PwC has pegged automation as key to agility within the supply chain sector. Aided by the fact that 34 percent of financial leaders pledged to leverage automation to improve and increase efficiency in logistics management, the sector has a lot to look forward to. Once there is 100 percent automation in the industry, we can look forward to the benefits of supply chain agility and speed & accuracy of decisions making. As the pandemic has put logistics automation on the highway, it's time to get going before it's too late. **C'**

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