

THE VICTORY MAGAZINE

THE EMERGING TECH GIANTS TO WATCH IN 2024

+ LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
THE CORNERSTONE
OF LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

+ LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

Beyond the Boardroom
Decoding the Work-Life
Balance of Successful
CEOs

MAMY TRAORE

Igniting Progress, Inspiring Change



JANUARY 2024



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 Printed and published by The
 Victory Magazine. Copyright 2024

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Editors Note

The Evolution of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has traversed an extraordinary journey, evolving from a theoretical concept to a transformative force that permeates our daily lives. As we stand at the intersection of human ingenuity and technological advancement, it is imperative to reflect on the captivating evolution of AI and its profound impact on various facets of our existence.

In its nascent stages, AI was a theoretical pursuit, captivating the minds of pioneers who envisioned machines capable of mimicking human intelligence. The seeds of AI were sown in the 1950s, and over the decades, relentless research and development transformed this vision into a reality.

The advent of machine learning marked a paradigm shift, allowing AI systems to learn from data and improve their performance over time without explicit programming. This breakthrough unleashed a wave of innovations, enabling machines to recognize patterns, make predictions, and even comprehend natural language.

Today, AI has become an integral part of our daily routines, shaping the way we work, communicate, and navigate the world. Virtual assistants, recommendation algorithms, and predictive analytics have become commonplace, seamlessly integrating AI into our digital experiences. Tech giants, fueled by massive datasets and computing power, lead the charge in developing and deploying AI applications that redefine industries.

The evolution of AI is most evident in its diverse applications. From healthcare diagnostics and personalized medicine to autonomous vehicles and smart homes, AI is a driving force behind unprecedented advancements. It has

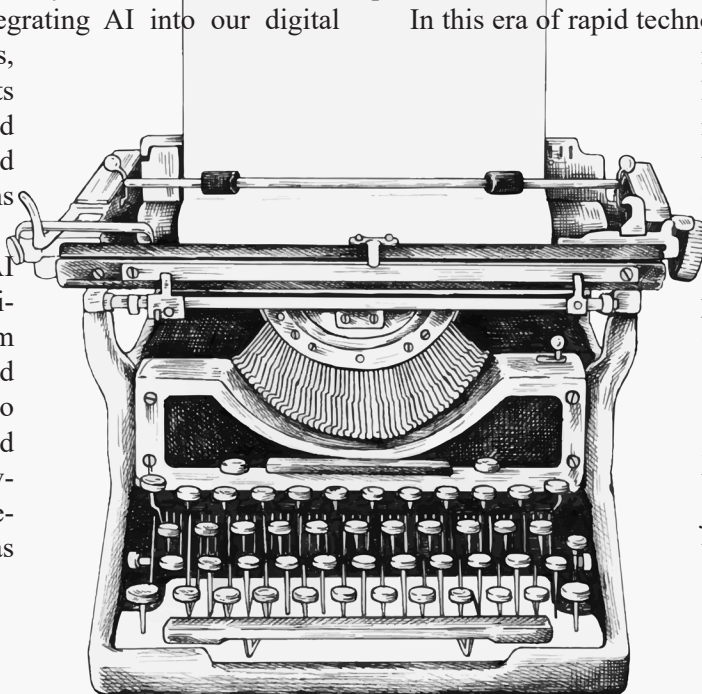
revolutionized customer service with chatbots, optimized supply chains with predictive analytics, and enhanced creativity through generative algorithms.

The pursuit of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), where machines can perform any intellectual task that a human being can, remains a fascinating yet challenging frontier. While AGI is a distant goal, incremental progress in narrow AI applications continues to reshape industries and elevate human potential.

However, the evolution of AI is not without its ethical considerations. Questions surrounding bias in algorithms, job displacement due to automation, and the ethical use of AI in decision-making processes have become central to the discourse. As AI permeates critical aspects of our lives, it is crucial to navigate these challenges thoughtfully and responsibly.

Looking ahead, the evolution of AI holds the promise of even greater achievements. Continued breakthroughs in natural language processing, reinforcement learning, and quantum computing are poised to unlock new realms of possibility. The collaboration between humans and AI is becoming increasingly symbiotic, augmenting our capabilities and solving complex problems at an unprecedented scale.

In this era of rapid technological evolution, the journey of AI is a testament to human curiosity and innovation. As we embrace the transformative power of artificial intelligence, it is essential to foster a balance between technological progress and ethical considerations. The future of AI is both exciting and challenging, and how we navigate this path will shape the trajectory of our collective journey into the age of intelligence.



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MAMY TRAORE

— Igniting Progress, Inspiring Change —

Amidst the vast digital highways of submarine cables, a standout luminary emerges in the exciting world of modern telecommunications. Just as an adept captain navigates through rough seas, companies like GUILAB SA find themselves sailing in the vast ocean of connectivity, led by an impressive figure who steers the course with suave expertise. Allow me to introduce Mamy Traore, the inscrutable CEO of GUILAB and a true conductor of leadership in the telecommunications sphere.

From Scratch

Mamy Traore was born and raised in the thriving city of Kankan, which is located roughly 600 kilometers east of Guinea's capital, Conakry. From an early age, Mamy Traore developed a strong belief in the critical role that education plays in fostering development. His early years were devoted to a never-ending quest for knowledge, setting him on a course that would eventually see him become the second of the only two members of his outstanding family of 33 siblings to get a college degree.

After completing his secondary education in Kankan, Mamy Traore's ambitions led him to the prestigious University Gamal Abdel Naser in Conakry, where he studied Computer Science, his ideal field. He worked hard and tenaciously to get his degree, which prepared him for his first professional position as an analyst programmer at the National Tax Bureau of Guinea.

But Mamy Traore quickly made a crucial professional change as a result of his desire for advancement and a more challenging setting. He chose to work in the private sector and began an amazing adventure inside the telecoms sector, creating a lasting impression on important firms like Huawei Technologies and MTN over his ten-year stay.



Mamy Traore
Guilab SA
Chief Executive Officer

Mamy Traore's trajectory produced numerous rewards, including significant recognitions that underlined his extraordinary efforts, via persistent commitment and an uncompromising focus on perfection. Notably, the prestigious MTN-Guinea IT Best Employee Award for 2011 is a testament to his outstanding accomplishments.

From Knowledge to Leadership

Despite shouldering a demanding workload, Mamy Traore remained committed to an unceasing quest for academic advancement, actively engaging in an array of continuous training programs encompassing Project Management, Leadership, and ICT workshops. This steadfast dedication to learning is evidenced by his attainment of the esteemed Project Management Professional (PMP) Certificate in 2011, conferred by the renowned Project Management Institute (PMI) headquartered in Pennsylvania. In parallel, he successfully earned a Bachelor's Degree in International Law from the esteemed local distance learning institution, ISFAD (Institut Supérieur de Formation à Distance).

During the span of 2008 to 2012, Mamy shared his expertise through part-time instructional roles, imparting knowledge on Unix/Linux Computer Operating Systems and Project Management at Kofi Annan University. This commitment to education endured and extended to the present day, with him contributing as a part-time Project Man-

agement instructor at the University Gamal Abdel Nasser of Conakry on weekends since 2013.

These accomplishments propelled Mamy Traore to a stage where his aspirations encompassed national policy-making and strategic planning, necessitating a higher tier of skill enhancement. In his pursuit of expanding his career horizons in policy-making, a remarkable opportunity arose when he was selected as a recipient of the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship by the US Department of State. From 2018 through 2020, he dedicated himself to obtaining a Master's degree in Science, Technology, and Public Policy from the esteemed Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). His master's thesis delved into an insightful exploration of the Status of Innovation within the Self-Driving Cars industry.

As a student, Mamy also assumed a part-time role as a Peer Consultant in the Expressive Communication Center (ECC) of RIT, providing invaluable support to fellow graduate students in honing their public speaking and communication skills.

Returning to his homeland of Guinea in 2021, Mamy Traore resumed his journey within the telecommunications realm, assuming the position of Director of Corporate Affairs at MTN. Notably, his exceptional capabilities and leadership prowess led to his eventual appointment as the esteemed Chief Executive Officer of GUILAB.



GUILAB SA in a Nutshell

GUILAB SA, also recognized as “La Guinéenne de Large Bande” or Guinean Broadband SA, a publicly held corporation established through a collaborative venture between the Guinean State and private entities (telecommunications operators and Internet Service Providers) in March 2011. This consortium-driven public-private partnership (PPP) manifests itself as a board of directors. GUILAB’s primary mandate revolves around the effective management of allocated capacities and the ongoing maintenance of telecommunications infrastructures affiliated with the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) submarine cable system within the Republic of Guinea.

In its decade-long operational tenure, GUILAB has held a pivotal role as a vital member of the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) consortium, overseeing the submarine cable operations within Guinea. Among its array of services, GUILAB provides international leased line (LLI) services for the seamless transportation of international telecommunications offerings such as Voice, SMS, Signaling, and Data, along with international IP transit for telecommunications operators and Internet service providers. Notably, GUILAB extends colocation services, affording a secure haven within its tier III Data Center for the hosting of critical digital infrastructure.

Central to GUILAB’s mission is its unwavering dedication to fuel the development of the digital economy within the Republic of Guinea. This aspiration materializes through the provision of impeccably high-quality connectivity services, accessible universally and tailored to offer optimal value. The overarching vision for GUILAB extends beyond mere existence, propelling the company to consistently surpass its own benchmarks. This vision is underpinned by aspirations to be a benchmark not only on a national and regional scale but also within the esteemed ACE consortium.

As the CEO

Mamy Traore, at the helm of GUILAB, has led the charge in pursuing an ambitious commercial agenda, resulting in remarkable achievements and prestigious accolades, securing a spot among the nation’s TOP5 best performing companies. Notably, these achievements encompassed a robust 22.38% year-on-year increase in business top lines, a remarkable 40.51% surge in activated ACE network capacity, a staggering 214% surge in IP transit revenue, and an impressive 42% growth in colocation business revenue.

Beyond financial success, GUILAB’s strategic prowess extended to becoming the fourth contributor to ACE submarine cable consortium maintenance costs, while



internally, a robust business process optimization facilitated streamlined operations, propelling telecommunications service offerings in Guinea. Mamy Traore’s strategic acumen further shone through in continuing pivotal alliances with industry giants such as Netflix, Google, Facebook, and Akamai, elevating user experiences by hosting cache servers and delivering heightened value to GUILAB’s direct customers, including Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and telecommunications players.

Moving forward, Mamy Traore’s strategic vision for GUILAB is shaped by a profound understanding of global telecommunications trends and local dynamics. With foresight into potential disruptions within Guinea’s telco infrastructure markets, including submarine and dark fiber optics, as well as pivotal components like FTTH and FTTP, GUILAB is primed to navigate these shifts. Drawing from a decade of telecom infrastructure expertise, the aim is to harness this accumulated knowledge on national, regional, and ACE consortium scales. This strategic vantage point positions GUILAB to offer value-added services leveraging existing infrastructure and platforms, thereby evolving into a potent Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) and Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) provider.

Fueled by this transformation, GUILAB is poised to emerge as a key player in the B2B and B2C landscape, providing cutting-edge digital solutions. This two-fold approach seeks to both stimulate demand and effectively address market needs, cementing GUILAB’s pivotal role in ushering in a new era of digital connectivity and innovation. 📌

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

THE CORNERSTONE OF LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

In the complex landscape of leadership, one trait stands out as the cornerstone of success—effective communication. Leaders, irrespective of their position or industry, must master the art of communication to foster collaboration, inspire teams, and guide organizations toward shared goals. This article explores the pivotal role of effective communication in leadership and how it serves as the linchpin for achieving enduring success.

At the heart of effective leadership is the ability to build trust, and open communication is the key. When leaders communicate transparently, sharing both successes and challenges, they create an environment of trust within their teams. This transparency fosters a sense of authenticity, allowing team members to feel secure in their roles and confident in their leader’s guidance. Trust is the bedrock upon which successful and enduring leadership relationships are built.

Aligning Vision and Goals

Effective communication serves as the bridge that connects a leader’s vision with the collective goals of the team. Leaders must articulate their vision clearly, ensuring that every team member understands the overarching objectives. By consistently reinforcing this vision through communication, leaders align the team’s efforts with a shared purpose, fostering a sense of unity and commitment.

Inspiring and Motivating Teams

Leadership is not merely about issuing directives; it is about inspiring and motivating others to achieve their best. Through compelling communication, leaders can ignite passion and enthusiasm within their teams. Whether it’s acknowledging individual contributions, sharing success stories, or expressing a genuine belief in the team’s potential, effective communication plays a pivotal role in maintaining high morale and driving peak performance.

Navigating Challenges with Transparent Communication

In times of uncertainty or adversity, effective leaders turn to transparent communication to guide their teams through challenges. Communicating openly about obstacles, changes, or setbacks allows leaders to manage expectations and build resilience within the team. By addressing concerns head-on and providing a clear roadmap forward, leaders foster a culture that values transparency in the face of adversity.

Encouraging a Culture of Collaboration

Leadership is a collective effort, and effective communication is the catalyst for fostering a culture of collaboration. Leaders who encourage open dialogue, active listening, and the free exchange of ideas create an environment where diverse perspectives are valued. This culture of collaboration not only enhances problem-solving capabilities but also



cultivates a sense of belonging and mutual respect among team members.

Adapting Communication Styles

Recognizing the diversity within a team, effective leaders tailor their communication styles to resonate with different individuals. Whether addressing a large group, interacting one-on-one, or communicating through written channels, leaders understand the importance of adapting their approach. This versatility in communication ensures that the message is received and understood by everyone, promoting inclusivity and strengthening team dynamics.

Feedback as a Two-Way Street

Effective communication is incomplete without a commitment to receiving and acting upon feedback.

Leaders who actively seek input from their teams create an environment that values continuous improvement. By demonstrating a willingness to listen, process feedback, and make necessary adjustments, leaders not only enhance their own effectiveness but also empower team members to contribute meaningfully to the organization's growth.

In the dynamic landscape of leadership, effective communication emerges as the linchpin that holds together the fabric of success. Building trust, aligning vision and goals, inspiring teams, navigating challenges, encouraging collaboration, adapting communication styles, and embracing feedback—all these facets of effective communication collectively define the art of leadership. As leaders recognize and invest in mastering this essential skill, they pave the way for not just individual success but the enduring success of their teams and organizations. 📌

PETER NAGY

GAMES FARM

Leading the Way from Concept to Reality

A leader of a gaming company is expected to have a wide range of skills and responsibilities that are specific to the video game development industry. He/she is also expected to be a very clear communicator with a clear vision and strategies towards calculated goals, identifying opportunities for growth and innovation, and staying ahead of industry trends. Thereby, talking about one such leader who through his company Games Farm has succeeded in developing several popular action-RPG Games, Peter Nagy is a gamer, in disguise of a capable leader.

Being an individual having an extensive experience leading a game development company, that too in a region where the gaming industry ecosystem is still underdeveloped, Peter Nagy is spearheading more than just a company, but an ecosystem. Having started his career over 20 years ago with no prior experience, driven purely by your passion for games and the limitless possibilities they offer for creative expression. It's great to see that Peter has been able to turn that passion into a successful career and contribute to the industry in a variety of ways.

With Games Farm, Peter Nagy is focusing on creating outstanding RPG games, which aligns with his long-standing dream of creating immersive fantasy worlds and adventures. It's also inspiring to hear that he has also initiated various ecosystem activities, including conferences, game jams, and collaborations with universities and schools to foster young talent. Additionally, Peter Nagy's efforts to secure external investments to accelerate growth and expand opportunities are commendable. It's clear that his passion for gaming is not just limited to creating games, but also extends to fostering growth and innovation in the industry as a whole.



Currently, I am focused on delegating tasks to others wherever possible, while still remaining involved in the overall vision and direction of the company





Peter Nagy
Games Farm
Chief Executive Officer

Setting the Bar High

Peter Nagy's role at Games Farm developed naturally based on the company and product needs, rather than any specific qualifications or experience. Initially, he was tasked with managing communication with their partners due to his strong language skills and willingness to take on new challenges. However, as the vision holder for each of their games, Peter became involved in various aspects of game development, including programming, modeling, texturing, animation, game design, and testing, in addition to utilizing my business and communication skills. "Currently, I am focused on delegating tasks to others wherever possible, while still remaining involved in the overall vision and direction of the company", he shared.

When Peter was asked about what was Games Farm's biggest achievement under his leadership, he shared - "As a result of our hard work and dedication, we have established ourselves as the leading premium game development studio in the region. We have attracted top talent to join our team and have gained positive recognition on the global game development stage, solidifying our long-term position". Continuing on his above statement, he added - "Our focus on high-quality RPG development for PC and consoles, combined with a strong track record, has earned us a reputation as a studio of choice in our industry". Also, through this conversation Peter gave us insights into how Games Farm is planning to continue their success, and has already implemented improved internal processes and increased efficiency while diversifying their activities

to achieve greater stability and long-term growth.

Though Games Farm still has many goals to achieve, both the company and Peter are committed to working tirelessly to become the top-tier global leaders in RPG development.

Just like any other company who faced uncertainty during the pandemic, Games Farm too found it hard in the initial days, but gradually, the company was able to overcome these challenges, and the experience ultimately led to some positive changes. Games Farm improved some of their processes and became more effective in various ways. While the pandemic posed a significant threat to their work, all thanks to the leadership and dedication put in by everyone, the company was able to turn it into an opportunity for growth and improvement in the long run.

One of the biggest challenges Peter and his team face despite all the success is that they are not just building a single company, but rather an entire ecosystem with multiple companies, projects, and activities such as publishing, international conferences, and funding. As a result, managing these activities is incredibly time-consuming for Peter, but with more people joining the cause, the ecosystem is starting to see improvements, and Peter hopes to continue to do what he's known for. Lastly, with 2 young children, he struggles to manage his work-life balance, but with so much to anticipate in the years to come, Peter hopes towards becoming more self-driven and seeing his children grow older and wiser. 🍷

THE CEO MINDSET

The role of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is undeniably complex, demanding not only a deep understanding of the business landscape but also a unique mindset that can weather the storms of leadership. The CEO mindset is a fascinating aspect of successful leadership, encompassing a blend of strategic thinking, resilience, innovation, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

One of the defining features of the CEO mindset is the ability to craft and execute a strategic vision. Successful CEOs are known for their forward-thinking approach, anticipating industry trends and disruptions. They possess a keen awareness of the ever-evolving business landscape and use this insight to make informed decisions that position their companies for long-term success. This strategic foresight enables CEOs to guide their organizations through uncertainties, making them architects of the future.

Resilience in the Face of Challenges

CEOs encounter numerous challenges on their leadership journey, from economic downturns to unexpected crises. The CEO mindset is characterized by resilience – the capacity to bounce back from setbacks and learn from adversity. Resilient

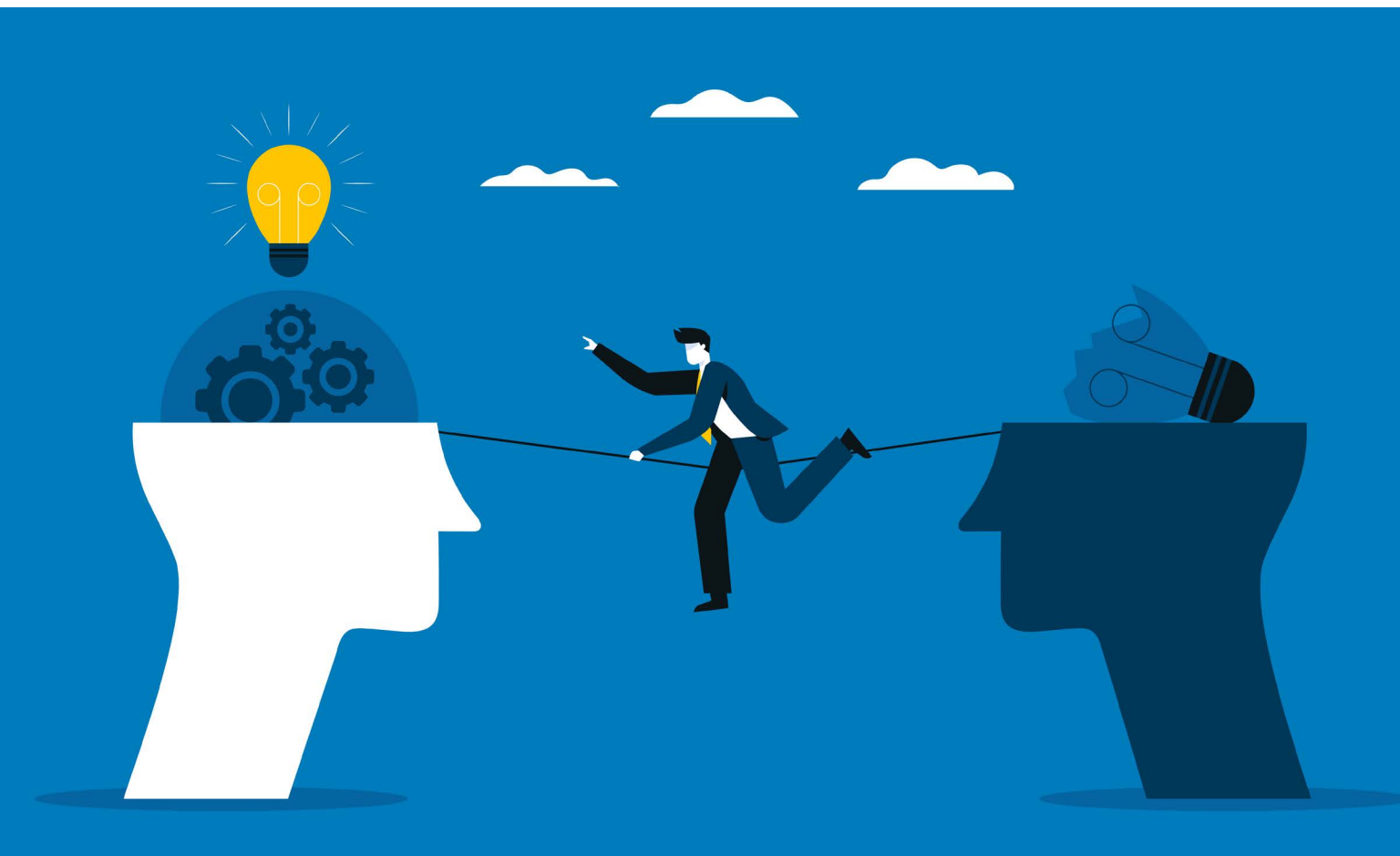
CEOs view challenges as opportunities for growth, leveraging setbacks as stepping stones toward greater success. This mental fortitude enables them to inspire confidence in their teams, fostering a culture of perseverance and adaptability within the organization.

Innovation and Risk-Taking

A hallmark of the CEO mindset is a willingness to embrace innovation and take calculated risks. Successful CEOs understand that stagnation is the enemy of progress. They foster a culture of creativity and continuous improvement within their organizations. Whether it's implementing cutting-edge technologies or challenging traditional business models, the CEO mindset thrives on pushing boundaries and exploring new frontiers. Calculated risk-taking is not just accepted but encouraged, recognizing that innovation is a catalyst for growth.

People-Centric Leadership

While strategic thinking and innovation are crucial, the CEO mindset also prioritizes people-centric leadership. Successful CEOs understand that their most valuable assets are their employees. They cultivate a positive workplace culture, emphasizing open communication, collaboration, and employee well-being. This people-centric approach fosters a sense of



loyalty and commitment among team members, creating a unified and motivated workforce.

Adaptability to Change

In today's dynamic business environment, adaptability is a non-negotiable trait for CEOs. The CEO mindset embraces change as a constant and positions the organization to thrive in evolving circumstances. Whether it's technological advancements, shifts in consumer behavior, or global crises, adaptable CEOs guide their teams through change with agility and foresight. They recognize the importance of staying ahead of the curve and adapting strategies to align with emerging trends.

Continuous Learning

The CEO mindset is characterized by a commitment to continuous learning. Successful CEOs understand that knowledge is power, and they actively seek opportunities

to expand their understanding of industry trends, leadership principles, and emerging technologies. Whether through formal education, mentorship, or networking, CEOs prioritize personal and professional development. This commitment to learning not only enhances their leadership skills but also sets the tone for a culture of curiosity and growth within the organization.

Conclusion

The CEO mindset is a dynamic blend of strategic vision, resilience, innovation, people-centric leadership, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous learning. Successful CEOs embody these traits, navigating challenges with grace and steering their organizations toward sustained success. Aspiring leaders can draw inspiration from the CEO mindset, recognizing that a strong foundation of leadership principles is key to achieving greatness in the complex world of business. 📌

GREGOR BIELER

APARAVI SOFTWARE AG

Visionary Leadership for a World of Possibilities

In today's digital age, data is a critical asset for businesses. As a result, software companies that offer data management solutions have become increasingly important. These companies specialize in developing software tools and platforms that enable businesses to manage their data more efficiently, securely, and cost-effectively.

Aparavi Software AG is one such company that offers cloud-based data retention and management solutions. As the CEO of Aparavi Software, Gregor Bieler is leading the company towards change by emphasizing the importance of data management in today's business landscape. And, under Bieler's leadership, Aparavi has developed innovative data management solutions that enable businesses to take control of their data and improve their data management practices. These solutions are designed to be easy to use, scalable, and cost-effective, making them accessible to businesses of all sizes.

A Brief Intro on APARAVI

APARAVI is a Swiss company with over 80 employees from 15 nations, developing, operating, and selling its data intelligence and automation platform in Europe and the US. Its universal data platform simplifies data management through intelligent automation and helps companies and authorities discover the value and risks of their unstructured data, no matter where it's located. APARAVI enables its customers to find, understand, and process their unstructured data efficiently in automated data lifecycle processes, ensuring cost savings, data breach prevention, CO2 footprint reduction, and data-driven decisions. Founded in 2016 by Adrian Knapp in Zug, Switzerland, APARAVI has offices in Munich, Germany, and Santa Monica, USA.

Whereas, APARAVI Europe was launched at the end of 2020 to help clients manage unstructured data growth and unlock its value. As the General Manager, Gregor Bieler built a team of 30 employees by the end of 2021 and launched a dedicated R&D center for the European market. Eventually, the Company contracted over 25 partners and acquired end customers from various industries. "Our platform scans, classifies, and automates unstructured data sets up to Petabyte volumes, delivering immediate return on investment", shared - Gregor Bieler.



Gregor Bieler
APARAVI Software Europe GmbH
Chief Executive Officer

*Our platform scans,
classifies, and automates
unstructured data sets
up to Petabyte volumes,
delivering immediate
return on investment*

Leading with Vision, Driving with Purpose

APARAVI Europe's mission is to help organizations achieve full transparency and control over their unstructured data, no matter where it is located. As the CEO of APARAVI Europe, Gregor Bieler leads a team that is dedicated to tackling the biggest challenge that companies face today - managing unstructured data. Unstructured data, which typically makes up 80% of a company's data and has a much higher growth rate than structured data, can be difficult to manage without the right tools. That's where APARAVI comes in.

With their AI-powered universal platform, APARAVI can search, find, and analyze more than 6,000 file types through connectors on file servers, cloud hyper scalers like Azure, and Sharepoint, among others. They can also classify with more than 200 standard sets, provide custom analysis through special queries and regular expressions, and allow movement and deletion of unstructured data. This automation helps APARAVI's customers gain control over their cost-intensive data growth through one single platform

What sets APARAVI apart is that they not only analyze metadata, but also the content of the files, which helps their clients gain deep insights, including identifying personal or sensitive data in photographs. This makes APARAVI's platform unique in the data management industry. Finally, the "lean & clean data" can be handed over via APIs to hundreds of data analytics and processing tools, making APARAVI "everybody's best friend" in the data analytics and management industry.

When we asked about APARAVI Europe's recent achievements under Gregor Bieler's capable leadership, the CEO himself shared - "For a UK construction company that suffered a ransomware attack affecting 1.8 million files and 1,200 employees, we were able to remedy the situation in a matter of days, identifying up to 30% of files with PII and avoiding 5-10x higher GDPR fines". He added - "With APARAVI, businesses can have peace of mind and avoid the costly consequences of data breaches, all thanks to our AI-powered platform that can quickly search, localize, classify, and analyze compromised data, saving our clients significant time and costs".

A Deep Dive into the Future

As global poly-crisis, fundamental shifts, and changing

consumer behaviors drive the need for digitalization, the amount of data that organizations must manage and leverage will only continue to grow. The coming years will see significant advancements in cloud computing, data privacy and security, edge computing, AI adoption, and hybrid data management approaches, which will fundamentally transform the data management and storage industry.

APARAVI is already ahead of the curve, where a platform for the analysis and management of unstructured data has been in development for years and is poised to lead the industry into this new era. With more than 50% of their employees dedicated to R&D and development, the software giant has the brightest minds focused on meeting the challenges of the future. "By embracing these changes and investing in cutting-edge technology, we can help organizations efficiently manage their data and unlock its full potential for business success in the digital age", concluded Mr. Bieler.

Plans Going Down the Lane

APARAVI is committed to continuously improving and expanding our services to better serve our clients. By the end of 2023, Mr. Bieler and his team plan to double the number of connectors to major cloud services, which currently include AWS, Azure, Sharepoint, and OneDrive. The company also understands the importance of user interaction and has implemented scenario-based scans and reporting, including data breach prevention and smart data migration, to enhance the user experience. And lastly, is also excited to announce that later this year, the APARAVI will be launching their AI modules, which will allow our customers to enter free text questions and requests, similar to ChatGPT, to trigger complex queries. With these advancements, Mr. Bieler and APARAVI Europe aim to further streamline and automate the data management process for all their clients.

On a Personal Level

Gregor Bieler is a loving father, music enthusiast, and sports addict who enjoys spending time outdoors and soaking up the sun. He holds a degree in Law and Economics from Munich University, and has completed MBA Preparation Seminars at IMD University Lausanne. In 2018 and 2019, Gregor was awarded the prestigious title of German IT Manager of the Year for his exceptional leadership and contributions to the field. ♥

BEYOND THE BOARDROOM

Decoding the Work-Life Balance of Successful CEOs

The role of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is often synonymous with long hours, high stress, and unrelenting responsibilities. However, an often-overlooked aspect of a CEO's life is how they manage to strike a balance between their professional and personal spheres. In this article, we delve into the strategies and habits that successful CEOs adopt to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Prioritizing Time Management

CEOs understand the importance of effective time management in maintaining a work-life balance. With demanding schedules and a multitude of responsibilities, successful leaders prioritize tasks and allocate time efficiently. This involves setting clear priorities, delegating tasks where necessary, and ensuring that the most crucial aspects of both work and personal life are given the attention they deserve.

Structured Workdays

Maintaining a balance between work and personal life often starts with structuring workdays in a way that allows CEOs to be productive while still preserving time for personal pursuits. Many CEOs follow a disciplined routine, allocating specific time blocks for meetings, strategic planning, and focused work. This structured approach enables them to avoid overworking and carve out dedicated time for family, hobbies, and relaxation.

Technology as an Enabler, Not a Barrier

While technology has made it easier for professionals to stay connected, successful CEOs understand the importance of setting boundaries. They leverage technology to enhance productivity during work hours but consciously disconnect during personal time. Establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life helps CEOs maintain a healthier balance and prevents burnout.

Family-Centric Values

CEOs who successfully manage their work-life balance often prioritize family values. Family time is regarded as non-negotiable, and these leaders make a concerted effort to be present for important events, celebrations, and daily routines. By fostering strong family connections, CEOs create a support system that not only sustains them personally but also contributes to their overall well-being and resilience in the professional realm.

Delegating Effectively

One key strategy employed by successful CEOs is the art of effective delegation. Recognizing that they cannot do everything themselves, CEOs build strong leadership teams and delegate responsibilities accordingly. This not only empowers their team members but also frees up time for CEOs to focus on high-priority tasks and allocate time to personal interests.



Wellness Practices

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance involves taking care of one's physical and mental well-being. Many CEOs incorporate wellness practices into their routines, such as regular exercise, meditation, and adequate sleep. These practices not only contribute to better health but also enhance their ability to handle stress and make sound decisions in the boardroom.

Unplugged Vacations

While it might seem challenging for CEOs to fully detach from work, successful leaders recognize the importance of unplugged vacations. Taking a break from the constant demands of the corporate world allows CEOs to recharge, gain fresh perspectives, and return to their roles with renewed energy and focus.

All in all, achieving a work-life balance is a constant journey for CEOs, requiring intentional efforts and a commitment to both personal and professional aspects of life. By adopting strategies such as effective time management, structured workdays, family-centric values, and wellness practices, successful CEOs showcase that it is possible to thrive in the boardroom while also savoring a fulfilling life outside of it. The lessons learned from their experiences can inspire professionals at all levels to seek a harmonious balance between their work and personal lives. ♥

DANIEL VALDES

NEXXYO LABS /MANIAC PANDA GAMES

Driving Success through Innovation and Collaboration



Daniel Valdes
CEO
Nexxyo Labs
ManiacPanda Games

A leader in the field of software development should possess a diverse range of skills and qualities to stay ahead in the highly competitive market. Where he/she is expected to be innovative, creative, and have a deep understanding of user experience and customer needs, and have strong technical expertise, as well as knowledge of emerging technologies and industry trends. Thus, shining a bright spotlight on one such leader who through his impressive communication and leadership skills has been inspiring and managing a team of developers, designers and engineers - Daniel Valdes heads Nexxyo Labs /Maniac Panda Games as the CEO.

Nexxyo Labs is a company that started operating as a software developer and consultant for third parties and gradually migrated towards creating its own products, the company's main pillar today. And, as the CEO - Daniel, motivates everyone onboard to work relentlessly towards the company's main goal of developing applications that facilitate the daily lives of several people and companies.

Also, as the leader of the whole parade at Nexxyo Labs, Daniel's current short-term goal is to finish the development of Outer Ring MMO (a game that uses blockchain technology), make a Triple A out of it, and market it to a global audience. Also, under Daniel's capable leadership, Nexxyo Labs is on the lookout to start new offices in Germany and Italy, expand the team to +250 people, launch four more games, and develop a huge blockchain ecosystem.

Leading the Way from the Start

Starting off his entrepreneurial journey in the restoration industry, where Daniel opened bars and restaurants successfully, he was always passionate towards game development. This very interest of his led him to explore the crypto industry early in 2010. And over time, Daniel gained experience managing investment portfolios, and in 2015, he launched his first project



“It’s an incredible journey for me to start a company with a few friends 3 years ago and now manage an international team of more than 170 people while keeping our headquarters 15 min from home in Pamplona



with Aurora Blockchain. Eventually this passion led to the creation of Nexxyo Labs, a company that started as a small team focused on app development for third-party clients, but after having quickly realized the potential of the blockchain industry, pivoted in that direction, leading to the launch of Bamboo Defi. Sharing a point on where Nexxyo Labs stands in today’s date, Daniel shares - “Today, Nexxyo Labs has grown exponentially, employing over 170 talented individuals, and we are proud to be not just a software development company but also a Triple A game studio named Maniac Panda Games”.

Talking specifically about what Bamboo Defi is all about, Daniel continued - “Bamboo Defi, a decentralized exchange, is the first blockchain product to be launched from Nexxyo Labs”. He added - “The project is renowned for creating Navarra’s first cryptocurrency, where Nexxyo Labs is also a founding member of BAS (Blockchain Arbitration Society)—an association promoting the development of legislation and the adoption of blockchain technology”.

Moreover, providing a thorough platform for a few team members at Nexxyo Labs who were previously avid video game developers, Daniel and his team launched - Outer Ring. An MMO game which uses blockchain technology, raised 15 million euros in 3 rounds of funding for its development. A year later, Game Development became the company’s flagship, now converted into a video game studio. In 2023 Daniel has 5 game releases in the pipeline.

A Leader by Heart

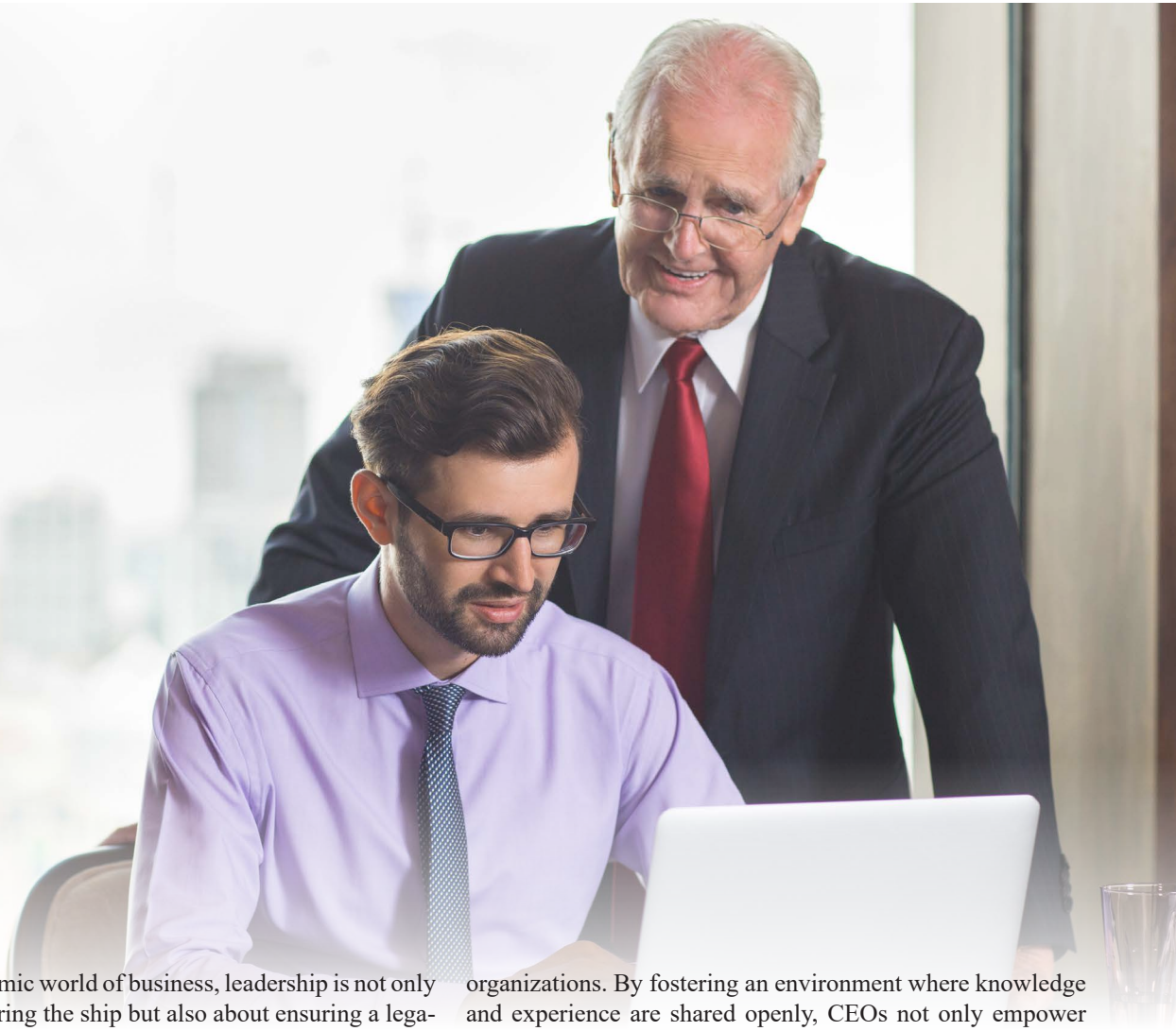
“It’s an incredible journey for me to start a company with a few friends 3 years ago and now manage an international team of more than 170 people while keeping our headquarters

15 min from home in Pamplona”, stated - Daniel, ecstatically. A hardcore team member, Daniel is very happy that he gets to work between an animator and an Unreal programmer. In the office and on Discord, Daniel makes himself always available for his team, be it on professional or on personal fronts. Daniel has ensured that the Company has no hierarchical communication barriers, which is perhaps a pillar of the company’s culture.

One more very important aspect of being a CEO is to take care of the connection with the audience. And in this pursuit Daniel and team are constantly interacting with their audience for games and blockchain-related products, investing significant time and resources in community management to get feedback and solve questions. Nexxyo Labs has also employed more than ten community managers and moderators, but the Company feels the key to client satisfaction is launching good products, which Nexxyo Labs has been doing and will continue to do so.

When Daniel was asked about his biggest achievements as the CEO of Nexxyo Labs /Maniac Panda Games, he spoke about Bamboo Defi now operating as a pioneer decentralized exchange in Spain, getting 50+ partners for Outer Ring MMO, growing their team from 14 to 170+ in a year, hiring top talent from the videogame industry, and several other achievements.

Lastly, on a personal level Daniel Valdes is just another geek in disguise. From being a married man with 3 Egyptian Cats, to regularly participating in Sword Fighting, or even being a Metalhead, Daniel Valdes fulfills all the expectations of a leader, who is a complete mixture of technical, creative and business expertise. ♥



In the dynamic world of business, leadership is not only about steering the ship but also about ensuring a legacy of capable leaders who can navigate the challenges of tomorrow. Recognizing this, many CEOs actively engage in mentorship, taking on the role of guides and nurturers for the next generation of leaders. In this article, we explore the significance of CEOs embracing mentorship and the impact it has on shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

Successful CEOs understand that their responsibility extends beyond immediate business objectives; it encompasses cultivating a legacy of leadership excellence. Mentorship is viewed as a critical tool to achieve this. By sharing their experiences, insights, and lessons learned, CEOs provide invaluable guidance to emerging leaders, helping them navigate the complexities of the corporate landscape.

Creating a Culture of Learning

CEOs who actively engage in mentorship contribute to the creation of a culture of continuous learning within their

organizations. By fostering an environment where knowledge and experience are shared openly, CEOs not only empower individual mentees but also elevate the collective capabilities of the entire workforce. This commitment to learning reinforces a sense of community and encourages a mindset of growth and development.

Transfer of Wisdom and Experience

CEOs bring a wealth of experience and wisdom to the mentorship table. Through one-on-one interactions, mentorship programs, or leadership development initiatives, CEOs share their insights on strategy, decision-making, and handling challenges. This transfer of knowledge accelerates the professional development of mentees, providing them with a unique perspective that goes beyond what textbooks or formal education can offer.

Nurturing Leadership Potential

One of the primary goals of CEO mentorship is to identify and nurture leadership potential within the organization. CEOs

CEOs AND MENTORSHIP

keenly observe their mentees, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Through personalized guidance and feedback, they help mentees develop the skills and qualities needed to assume leadership roles. This proactive approach to talent development is an investment in the future success of both individuals and the company as a whole.

Building a Diverse Leadership Pipeline

CEOs committed to mentorship often prioritize building a diverse leadership pipeline. By actively mentoring individuals from various backgrounds, genders, and experiences, CEOs contribute to fostering a more inclusive and innovative corporate culture. This commitment to diversity not only reflects the values of the organization but also ensures that leadership perspectives are broadened and enriched.

Encouraging Risk-Taking and Innovation

CEOs who embrace mentorship encourage mentees to take calculated risks and think innovatively. They create an environment where it's safe to experiment and learn from failures. This approach not only fosters a culture of innovation

but also instills in mentees the confidence to push boundaries and challenge the status quo, essential qualities for effective leadership in today's fast-paced business landscape.

Succession Planning and Continuity

CEOs who actively engage in mentorship contribute to effective succession planning. By identifying and grooming potential successors, they ensure a smooth transition of leadership when the time comes. This proactive approach mitigates the risks associated with leadership changes, providing stability and continuity for the organization.

CEOs who invest time and effort in mentorship are not just grooming future leaders; they are actively shaping the future of their organizations and the business landscape at large. Mentorship is a powerful tool that goes beyond the boardroom, creating a legacy of capable, ethical, and forward-thinking leaders who will drive innovation, navigate challenges, and carry the torch of success into the future. As the saying goes, "Great leaders create more leaders," and CEOs embracing mentorship embody this principle, leaving an indelible mark on the leadership landscape. ♥

LAUREN ORLANDO

XENIA EDUCATION LLC

Breaking Barriers, Leading Innovation

Women have been making significant contributions to the technology industry for decades, yet the representation of women in leadership positions in tech has historically been low. However, over the years, more and more women have been breaking through the glass ceiling and taking on prominent roles in the tech industry. And, their achievements have not only broken down barriers for women but have also helped to create more inclusive and diverse workplaces in the tech industry. Ms. Lauren Orlando is one such prime example of innovative excellence coupled with philanthropic ideals, who through her company Xenia Education is facilitating every refugee to start on a journey that not only will make them capable, but also instill a sense of hope in them.

Having started Xenia as an idea amongst 5 like-minded individuals around helping refugees establish themselves in new countries and having the ability to educate themselves, Xenia helps them learn not only the local language but also to convert them into confident individuals. "Connecting refugees with educators and employers who are willing to look at persons in a particular field or skill level is what we are aiming to provide refugees in one app for ease of access and to encourage them of a greater future ahead", shares - Ms. Lauren.

Talking about how Lauren and team came up with the idea of Xenia, she shares - "Our inspiration began with Professor Henrik Totterman who pushed us in our capstone project to find a solution to the global crisis of displaced individuals globally". "Education was the key, but how do they access it if they have nothing? And while jobs are available, what education do you need to have or what experience can you get as quickly as possible to have an opportunity to apply for those positions? These are the problems that helped find and eventually create Xenia", she adds.

When Women Lead - Tech Succeeds

Xenia Education LLC was created to establish a dialogue between the students and their personal and professional journey. Unlike most universities or educational platforms

that only provide the "how," the whole team of Xenia seeks to understand the student's perspective and motivation for undertaking a particular course, tailoring the experience to meet the needs of each individual. Also, Xenia believes that this personalized approach is essential to help students achieve success in their new environment.

Since the inception, Xenia has received tremendous support, and it is the most significant achievement so far for Ms. Lauren and her co-founders and the staff. As a company, Xenia is committed to taking baby steps and ensuring that every aspect of their mission has a positive impact on the lives of all students who enroll into their programs. The company understands that every inch of this endeavor can affect a person's life, and accordingly the management of Xenia takes this responsibility very seriously.

Moreover, to ensure that only quality education gets imparted across every program offered at Xenia, Ms. Lauren has worked to build strong bonds with core universities to better understand the essential needs, structures, and accreditation available to offer the students. Xenia looks forward to leveraging the faculties of these universities to help train the students and create a community from each university. In addition to working with their partner universities, Xenia plans to expand their network to include remote teachers and outside experts who speak the languages of the students. This approach will provide the students with a well-balanced structure that meets their individual needs.

Most importantly, to ensure the quality of the teachers, the interview process at Xenia is extensive and elaborate, and the team conducts an in-depth background check to ensure they are qualified and able to help the students succeed. "At Xenia, we believe that our students deserve the best possible education and support, and we are committed to providing that", Ms. Lauren concludes.

As a co-founder, Ms. Lauren's main objectives include staying abreast of the latest developments and trends in the education industry to understand the needs of learners, regularly engaging with students and instructors to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement. Also, by utilizing data analytics to track student progress and performance, investing in the professional development of instructors and staff to enhance the quality of educational products, as the



Lauren Orlando
Xenia Education LLC.
CEO & Co-Founder

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co-founder Lauren is aiming towards fostering a culture of innovation to encourage experimentation and identify new teaching methods, and continuously evaluating and improving educational products to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. These goals are aimed at creating a high-quality and innovative educational experience for learners.

Services Offered

Xenia Education LLC's primary service is to offer an educational roadmap to refugees, displaced individuals, and those seeking asylum or a new direction in life within a new country. Through this platform, students can view the entire educational program and journey that they will embark on once they undertake this new challenge in their life and career. The program offers a variety of services, including an entire educational course accredited by a recognized university, translation services and guides, mentorship programs, immigration assistance, and access to the Fortune 500 "buddy" system, where students can receive tutoring and guidance from industry professionals.

The offerings extend beyond simply providing students with a course catalog and sending them on their way. Xenia aims to provide a comprehensive handbook to aid them in transitioning into a new culture, language, career, and personal lifestyle. At Xenia, students are welcomed into a supportive family that is there to offer help at any roadblock, seeing each individual as a human beyond their resume. By providing these services, Ms. Lauren and her team aims to benefit not only the students but also their families.

Proven to Excel

Xenia Education utilizes several research methods to improve its educational offerings. Learning analytics are used to track student progress and performance, while surveys and feedback

mechanisms are employed to understand student experiences and perceptions. Focus groups provide more detailed feedback and insights, helping to identify areas for improvement. Comparative analysis is also carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of educational products by comparing student outcomes and success rates with those of similar institutions or programs, particularly those universities and institutions that Xenia Education is partnering with.

Xenia Education employs several strategies to ensure the accuracy and relevance of its educational content. Subject matter experts are engaged to review and validate the content, providing feedback and updates as needed. Continuous review is also conducted to keep the content up-to-date with the rapidly evolving fields. Industry partnerships with relevant leaders are pursued to gain access to the latest developments and insights, and student feedback is collected to understand if the content remains relevant and up-to-date. Additionally, Xenia Education implements a robust quality assurance process that includes multiple rounds of review and testing by subject matter experts, editors, and instructional designers before the content is published. These measures help ensure that Xenia Education's educational materials are accurate, up-to-date, and of high quality.

Beyond Xenia

On a personal level, Ms. Lauren believes she's a mid-30s individual who is very busy, with multiple jobs and launching Xenia Education as a big company is her biggest goal for now. When she has free time, she enjoys hiking in the mountains, dancing, and playing team sports. Her friends describe her life as hectic. Her all-time mantra she follows very strictly is - "Time is a mindset, and determination is a choice". ♥



In order to be able to convey your ideas to others, Guest Posting communication skills are essential. With, good communication skills you can excel in your career. No matter if you are a business owner or a service provider communication helps in every field. However many people underestimate the power of possessing good communication skills. In this article, we will tell you why communication is so important for every individual.

Communication is a life skill and learning how to communicate your ideas and feelings is not an option but a necessity to survive in this society. Technically, communication can be described as transferring information so that the other person has a greater understanding. You can communicate vocally, through your writing, non verbally or visually

through images, graphs or charts. All in all, it is an important skill to have for a successful career.

Why do you need communication skills?

There are several reasons why communication skills are an individual's prized possession. Some of them are mentioned below.

They are considered valuable in the workplace

If you are hunting for a job or if you want a promotion you need to possess good communication skills.

It is important to communicate your ideas properly to the interviewer. Apart from speaking you should also take care of other things like your body posture, eye contact and vocabulary. Having good communication skills will help you

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN 2024

to express your thoughts and ideas clearly.

Moreover, employers consider communication skills amongst one of the most important selection criteria.

It is demanded by businesses

Communication skills, be it oral written is one of the most demanded skills in 2021. Employees are encouraged to improve their communication skills by taking up courses or training. Communication skills are high in demand for the last few years and they will continue to be in demand for many years to come.

Helps in polishing your career

Whether you are a business owner or an employee in some company your work will not remain restricted to sitting in front of your computer all day. There will be loads of other things that you will be required to do. Things like giving instructions, working in teams, discussing problems and interacting with colleagues are a part of everyday work routine.

Therefore you must be able to deliver your thoughts and ideas clearly so that everybody understands them properly.

Therefore if you want to be a part of the organisation for the long term you have to be good at your job plus you should possess good communication skills.

Helps you to speak concisely

Everybody gets nervous when speaking to their client or superiors in the office. Communication skills teach you to speak efficiently in multiple situations. It will help you learn to speak concisely so that you impress your superiors. On the other hand, Speaking long and unnecessary

sentences can leave a bad impression on your listener.

Helps to develop a healthy interaction with customers

All that customers want from any company is to be understood. Customers want the company to hear and understand what they want and how they want it. This is very important in case your business requires a lot of customer interaction on a daily basis. Customers love companies that can quickly understand their problems or requirements. Therefore if you want to build a healthy relationship with your customers then possessing good communication skills is essential.

Communication skills help in enhancing your professional image

Do you want to know how you can make your first impression good? The answer is communication skills! Yes, with good communication skills you will be able to build a good impression in front of your employer, customers or friends. A well-written communication skill will make your portfolio and CV more impressive. Whereas good oral communication will help you to make a good impression on your interview. If you want to be successful in your career you must possess good communication skills.

Final verdict

Good communication skills will give you innumerable benefits and perks. It will help you to become better at making decisions and solving problems. You will have a streamlined workflow and will be able to build a healthy business relationship. By learning to communicate well you will be able to interact in a more productive and constructed manner thereby polishing and enhancing your career. ♥

KATHI KLAWITTER

ALLIED PAYMENT NETWORK

Leaders in the fintech industry are driving the transformation of the financial services landscape. This rapidly growing sector has disrupted traditional financial institutions and created new opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and customer experience. Today, leaders in fintech are responsible for developing and implementing disruptive technologies that are changing the way financial services are delivered. They are often entrepreneurs, visionaries, and experts in technology and finance, who are driven by a desire to create better, faster, and more accessible financial services.

One such fintech leader is Kathi Klawitter, the Chief Operating Officer of Allied Payment Network, Inc. Her expertise and leadership have been instrumental in driving the success of the company, which is at the forefront of delivering innovative digital payment solutions to financial institutions and consumers.

From the Scratch

As a young adult fresh out of college, Kathi Klawitter was eager but unsure of her path. She was fortunate to land her first role in the payments industry working for a processor in the ACH and credit card acquiring side of payments. Kathi quickly developed a passion for the industry and actively sought out opportunities to grow her skills and expertise. Over time, she gained experience working closely with acquiring banks, ISOs, and TPPs, building a robust network within the payments space and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the industry. This diverse experience enabled Kathi to manage the payments line of business for a mid-sized bank, offering credit card acquiring programs for community banks, building and scaling ISOs, and ultimately overseeing the successful merger of operations for multiple acquisitions in fintech.

Journey so far at Allied Payment Network, Inc.

As Allied Payment Network, Inc. has established itself as a champion for community financial institutions, the company believes in prioritizing its clients' needs with a client-first approach. This environment allows for nimble



Kathi Klawitter
Allied Payment Network, Inc.
Chief Operating Officer

Work-life balance is a myth because there is no real tradeoff. Work bleeds into personal life and vice versa. I just do my best to bring the two into “harmony,” so to speak. I know that I am no good to anyone, especially my family, if I am not well and happy

decision-making and fast-paced execution, which is perhaps the main reason Kathi Klawitter took up the role of the COO at Allied.

Kathi Klawitter, as a new addition to the executive team at Allied Payment Network, has dedicated her initial months to actively listening, learning, and immersing herself in the company’s culture. Alongside the team, Kathi plans to execute strategic long-range plans that prioritize client productivity and increase margins through more efficient processes. Her focus on collaboration and goal-oriented execution will play a vital role in achieving Allied’s business objectives.

Furthermore, Kathi Klawitter brings grit and determination to her role at Allied Payment Network, always willing to get into the trenches alongside her team. She values collaboration and believes in pushing each other to be their best, never settling for less. Kathi’s approach centers around asking questions, executing strategies, and fostering a scrappy, respectful, and professional culture. Her in-depth understanding of Allied’s operations enables her to identify key areas for technology investment and engineering, with a focus on building and retaining a winning team that meets measurable metrics.

Overcoming Challenges

The payments and core processing fintech market is currently dominated by a handful of major players, which poses a significant challenge for newcomers like Allied. Nonetheless, by forging partnerships with community and regional financial institutions, and by consistently delivering high-quality products and services, Allied is building a reputation that is gaining traction in the industry. As this trend continues, Allied under the capable leadership of Ms. Klawitter expects to see the momentum shift in its favor, challenging the status quo and paving the way for a more diverse and competitive market.

Future Roadmap

Under the leadership of CEO Geoff Knapp, Allied Payment Network is poised to expand its reach and become a major

player in the payments industry. Geoff’s 20+ years of experience in fintech have helped shape his dynamic, driven, and passionate leadership style. Kathi Klawitter is working closely with Geoff to support his vision of establishing direct relationships with larger banks and credit unions, ultimately reducing reliance on VAR partners. Allied’s size allows for nimble product innovation and delivery, with clients playing a key role in shaping the roadmap.

On a Personal Level

Kathi Klawitter is a dedicated mother, wife, friend, and daughter who finds immense joy in being present for her children’s sporting and school events, as well as exploring the world with them during off-seasons and summers, always with their beloved family shih tzu in tow. As a leader, she grows by embodying personal accountability in all she does, driven by her sense of purpose to contribute to something greater than herself. Despite being hard on herself at times, Kathi’s self-honesty and desire to improve her own results continuously motivate her.

As a leader, Kathi Klawitter keeps an eye on industry trends by reading news, attending events, and nurturing relationships with peers. Prioritizing tasks is crucial for her as she acknowledges that she cannot have it all. She sets her expectations accordingly and occasionally puts a deadline before her leisure time. At the same time, she puts her family’s important moments before work commitments. In her previous COO role, Kathi realized that it’s okay to lean more on her husband, friends and family for support and to let go of certain tasks.

Lastly, talking about how she manages to balance her work and personal life effectively, she stated - “Work-life balance is a myth because there is no real tradeoff. Work bleeds into personal life and vice versa. I just do my best to bring the two into “harmony,” so to speak. I know that I am no good to anyone, especially my family, if I am not well and happy”. ♥



4 TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR EVENTS SUCCESS

There is a lot of pressure involved with live events, Guest Posting which makes it essential to find the right AV production partner. The company you select can largely influence your event's success, and there are various options to weigh in this process. Here are four considerations to aid in making the best decision.

1. Give Yourself Plenty of Planning Room

We've all been to events where one person orchestrates the entire event through sheer will. Without that person, the event may not have been the success it was. But operating this way comes with its risks. Letting an event rely on one person leaves the potential for it to all come crashing down.

Planning ahead can help mitigate certain disasters. It provides space to anticipate specific issues, handle them proactively or avoid them altogether. Thus, it's essential to give yourself plenty of time to make plans.

When is the best time to start the collaboration process with an AV production partner? Channel Audio recommends starting 6-12 months before the event. However, for a larger event, 9-12 months is a safer planning period. Although companies can pull events off in shorter time frames, this breathing room helps prevent pitfalls.

What Will Happen if You Don't Plan Ahead?

Many venues book up at least 6 months to a year in advance. However, an AV partner rarely enters the picture until closer to the event; sometimes only 1-3 months ahead! This can create some issues you can easily avoid if you allow ample time to plan.

Here are a few challenges you may encounter if you don't plan ahead:

Limited AV Partner Options

A short lead time can mean the AV company you wish to partner with is unavailable. They might have other events they're preparing for or decline the job because of the tight

turnaround. Some companies only take jobs if they know they can deliver a high-quality production.

Increased Prices

Short lead times also leave you vulnerable to higher prices. Last-minute bookings can often incur late fees, and equipment rentals, cross-rentals, trucking costs and labor rates can add up quickly.

In addition, the AV company's costs will also rise because they will be hard-pressed to pull off the event. Companies must complete tasks immediately, and priorities might need to be rearranged to meet deadlines.

Enhanced Risk of Low-Quality Services

Not all events will crash and burn if you don't plan the occasion until three months out; however, the quality is likely to suffer. For example, you may not have your preferred event crew. With inflation and labor shortages, getting a premium crew at a moment's notice is challenging.

Furthermore, you may not secure the equipment you want or need. Instead, you will need to rent what's available. Lately, there's a limited selection of your preferred AV equipment, and you don't want to settle for adequacy with your event.

You can avoid all this simply by planning ahead. Being proactive allows you to secure the provider, labor and equipment needed, and it can help your budget. It creates room for streamlining and ensuring things go as planned while having backup plans where required. The great part is that one person won't be going crazy trying to hold your event together.

2. Have a Budget and Be Open About It

Clients may not want to talk openly about their budget right away. However, knowing your budget is crucial for your AV partner. Some people believe not being transparent with the budget will earn them better deals. When production partners aren't aware of your budget, they can't provide the most accurate plan.

Instead, knowing the budget will help your AV partner make your event the best it can be while meeting your needs and goals. Not knowing the budget means they won't know when they exceed it. If a quote comes in over budget, your partner has a difficult time redesigning the plans to meet your budget. Sharing your budget upfront can prevent this painful process and save time.

Sharing a range will give your AV partner an idea to work with if you don't have a specific number. Once your partner knows the budget, they can discuss what they can do within it, and you can work together to make sure the event is successful without going over.

3. Focus on Results Instead of Equipment

Companies choose their AV production partners for a reason. Your partner is an expert in their field and can pull off extraordinary live events, time after time. They know what it takes to accomplish a seamless event from start to finish, including the logistics, personnel, and equipment.

When having meaningful discussions with your AV partner, it's essential to focus on the desired results rather than prescribing specific equipment. When conversing about an event, it's best not to start by mentioning the gear you do or don't want because you will lose the bigger picture. Instead, tell your partner what you want the event to look, feel, and sound like, and how you will measure its success.

The other possibility is that someone in your organization believes a specific piece of equipment is required but your AV partner may not be familiar with it. When a company isn't familiar with a particular gear, they may need to cross-rent it for you, which can increase the overall cost. It's typically ideal for the AV team to be comfortable and familiar with the equipment if they're operating it.

Communicating the desired results of the event is beneficial to your AV production partner. It helps them connect with the event and take ownership of creating successful events and meeting goals.

4. Select the Best Partner for Your Specific Event

Different AV production partners have distinct skill sets, preferences and experiences. Therefore, selecting the best partner for your specific event requirements and goals is essential.

Here are a few considerations when choosing the right partner for your event:

Aligning Values

To align your values with your AV production partner, consider what you stand for and want to portray. For example, consider if your business's style is laid-back or buttoned-up. Perhaps you represent a religious organization. Here, selecting a rock n' roll touring production company is likely

not the best fit. Differences in values can cause disconnects and disagreements. Aligning on common ground and values helps the event planning go smoothly.

Considering History and Reputation

Select an AV production partner based on their business history and reputation. You can do this by researching the type of events they usually host and see if they are like your own. Although a company may have prestigious clients, this doesn't mean they are the right fit for your event type. For example, a company producing significant musical acts may not be the best choice for a conference event in a hotel ballroom.

Communicating Effectively

It's vital to have open communication with your AV production partner. For example, it should excite your partner to be a part of your project. A sign of open communication is engaging in the conversation and asking questions. Respectable AV companies complete their due diligence and research you and the event before meeting you. You should always partner with an AV company that wants to work with you and tries to sell their services to you, not the other way around.

Seeking Committed and Skilled Event Specialists

Finally, one last component to consider is finding an AV production partner with a thoroughly skilled team and event specialists ready to help make your event a success. Whether that means full-time employees or committed freelancers, partnering with industry professionals is vital.

When some AV companies use freelancers who come and go, you may not hold their focus ahead of your event because they're working from show to show. Thus, it's more challenging to plan ahead. Due to their knowledge of subsequent productions and capacity to plan, full-time event specialists and freelancers have the time and attention to devote to every detail of your event.

Additionally, find a designated lead from your AV partner. This professional will act as a point of contact and handle new requests, troubleshoot issues and answer any questions. Understanding who to address when you have service questions or event updates can help you contact them directly. As a result, the company's liaison can reach out to you with event questions or challenges they encounter.

Start Planning for Success with Channel Audio

Events have the potential to come faster than expected. Planning in advance and with a defined budget helps you start on the right track. You can simply focus on results and select the best AV partner for your event. If you want to start planning for success now, contact Channel Audio at (615) 669-2126! 📞

ANNA-MARIA HOFFMANN

ODOROSO GMBH

Over the last few decades, women have made significant strides in breaking down barriers and achieving leadership positions in the business world, across various verticals. Their contributions have

transformed industries and opened new opportunities for innovation and growth. Moreover, today, women leaders in business are changing the whole scene by driving advancements in various fields such as finance, marketing, technology, and entrepreneurship.

One such leader is Anna-Maria Hoffmann, the Managing Director of Odoroso GmbH, a company that has a permanent range of over 60,000 items in the areas of luxury cosmetics, hair care and fragrances. As a woman at the helm of a business, Hoffmann is a trailblazer in her field, inspiring other women to follow in her footsteps and shatter the glass ceiling. Also, as more women leaders like Hoffmann enter the business/e-commerce world, they are bringing a fresh perspective and new ideas that are shaping the future of business and changing the scene in profound ways.

A Start of Something Beautiful

Odoroso has a fascinating history of adventure and innovation. In 1999, the founder started the first online beauty and care shop, which was a groundbreaking concept at the time. While searching for investors and attending conferences to explain the new world of e-commerce, she realized that many people had no idea what it was all about. At one event, the wife of the Bavarian Minister of Economics asked where the shop was located on a street, showing the classic idea of high-end shopping. However, the founder saw it as a challenge to compete with this traditional shopping experience.

After some startup ventures and consulting work in the field, the founder planned to take a sabbatical year in 2009 to focus on completing her PhD thesis on “Digital Capitalism, New Economy, e-Commerce. A Treatise on the Global Webonomy of the 21st



Anna-Maria Hoffmann
Odoroso GmbH
Managing Director

“Digital Capitalism, New Economy, e-Commerce. A Treatise on the Global Webonomy of the 21st Century

Century”. However, her corporate lawyer and friend found her analysis of the current market exciting and convinced her to start up again. The market has changed significantly in the past 10 years, with advancements in digital technology and online shopping trends.

Recognizing the increased demand for online luxury cosmetic products and the growing popularity of power shoppers, the founder launched Odoroso GmbH, a company that offers luxury beauty products at top prices. With this new venture, the founder continues to be a pioneer and innovator in the e-commerce industry.

As the Managing Director

As the Managing Director of Odoroso GmbH, Anna-Maria Hoffmann oversees the company’s efforts to satisfy the mass of orders despite the exclusive and restrictive distribution of the luxury industry. She is keen on dynamism and flexibility, and has expanded collaboration between sales and purchasing to respond immediately to changes in the market, ensuring steady growth for the company. Hoffmann recognizes the value of a diverse team and encourages the personal responsibility and intellectual abilities of her employees to maintain a dynamic and flexible company culture. The company’s liberal and conservative business philosophy, which combines the teachings of the Austrian School of Economics and the Chicago School of Economics, is reflected in its emphasis on respectful treatment, transparency, mutual support, and growth not achieved at any cost.

Anna-Maria Hoffmann also leads the company’s efforts to meet the challenges of operating within the exclusive distribution channels of the luxury industry while ensuring customer satisfaction. Under her leadership, Odoroso has established itself as a crucial partner for major global

beauty platforms, thanks to its competitive prices and extensive experience in purchasing. Hoffmann is committed to continually developing and improving the company’s offerings, including collaborating with top IT consultants who also teach at the prestigious Technical University of Munich.

On a Personal Level

Anna-Maria Hoffmann has been happily married to her childhood love for over 26 years and together they have a 17-year-old son. They enjoy traveling and work closely together, both scientifically and culturally. Her family has been a great support system for her professional life.

Anna-Maria works as an entrepreneur in Germany and Denmark, taking advantage of the digital revolution to work from her favorite places. She has a degree in international business administration from the International School of Management in Germany and years of experience as a management consultant in Germany and abroad. She is an online pioneer, having gained experience in eCommerce since 1998. Anna-Maria was also the managing director of a prominent online store in Germany from 2001 to 2008. Since then, she has successfully implemented various online concepts as a consultant and founded Odoroso GmbH.

In addition to her business pursuits, Anna-Maria is active in the fields of economics and political science, focusing on topics such as digital capitalism, economic freedom, internal security, geopolitical strategies, and globalization. She has taken classes at the Hochschule für Politik München/Ludwig Maximilians Universität München and holds attestations and certificates from the Cámara de Comercio, Industria y Servicios de Madrid and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Anna-Maria is currently a candidate for a Ph.D. in Economic Science. 

The background of the advertisement is a scenic landscape featuring a calm body of water that perfectly reflects the surrounding rugged, rocky cliffs. The sky is clear and blue. In the top left corner, the OnePlus logo is displayed. On the right side, a portion of a smartphone is visible, its screen showing a person sitting on a rocky ledge, looking out over a similar landscape. The phone's design is sleek with a thin bezel.

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