

Cultivating High Performance Teams

AICPA & CIMA
CGMA Leadership Academy
Transformative Leadership for a Sustainable Future
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

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Setting The Scene

Inspiration or Fear

The Finest Hour

“ We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas” June 4, 1940, House of Commons, London.



Sir Winston Churchill without his cigar, hence the scowl

Credits: Youssuf Karsh

Houston, We have a problem

“...We've never lost an American in space and we're sure as hell not gonna lose one on my watch...

Failure is not an option...” and to hope is not enough

Gene Kranz (The rescue of Apollo 13) & others

One way to galvanise a group of people, to come up with a solution, within a limited time frame, against all odds.



Err Houston, we've had a problem.
[pause] We've had a main B bus
undervolt.

— *Jim Lovell* —

AZ QUOTES

Inspire, Not Radicalise

- There is a hard line difference, both can produce the same outcomes
- Weaponise an inspiration
- Is the difference critical thinking?
- Separating the wheat from shaff.
- Distinguishing between good and bad.



Raison d'être

Reason for being

- Extremely powerful
- It bonds, it builds, it heals and drives performance
- “For God, King and Country” - Really? Is it relevant?
- “What man is a man who does not make the world better...”
- How to harness....?



Esprit de Corps

- Shared purpose
- Camaraderie
- United in spirit
- You will never walk alone?



What are high performing teams?

A loose definition

My own words

- Broadly, a high performance team is capable of working independently, applies critical thinking, has the capacity to achieve above and beyond the expectations that have been set for them, that includes their targets, key results and specific objectives. They are high achievers, and have the stamina to operate in this manner on an extended basis, and are willing to work as a team, mixing a wide variety of different skills and abilities that exist within that team, a melting pot if you will.

Main Requirements

- Raison d'être
- Trust
- Leadership
- Empowerment and work independently
- Alignment
- Comradeship
- Ultra clear tasks and objectives
- Staying in your own lane

So how do others do it?

The Gemencheh Boys

The Cricket Team from FELDA Bukit Rokan Utara, Negeri Sembilan - No Retreat, No Surrender - Circa 1997

- Six wild kids (enam jahanam) from a FELDA Settlement transformed into a winning national cricket team
- Cikgu (Teacher) Azman Aziz - The true hero and team builder
- He made it his raison d'être and had no clue what cricket was
- He brought out the best in the boys. Many went on to successful careers and one represented Malaysia in 2017 to win gold at the SEA games and represented Malaysia at the World Cup in 2019,
- Short life span.



Credits: Astro Shaw

The Regiment

- Militaristic, defined structure.
- Typical examples: The Royal Malay Regiment and The Welsh Guards (The Household Division)
- Driven by hierarchy, customs, tradition, legends, sense of history, esprit de corps our glorious dead and the “Colours”, long life...
- Lt Adnan, his heroism is burnt into the psyche of the regiment
- The institutional knowledge resides with the senior NCOs, they are always empowered. Officers are sometimes in transition
- Punishment and discipline are the enablers.



1st Battalion, Royal Malay Regiment and The Welsh Guards at Buckingham Palace 2008

High performance teams

Building in-house teams

- Raison d'être or a common purpose
- Clear tasks, targets and objectives
- Appropriate skills (diverse and specific)
- Leadership
- Trust
- Camaraderie
- Structure, process and systems
- Commitment

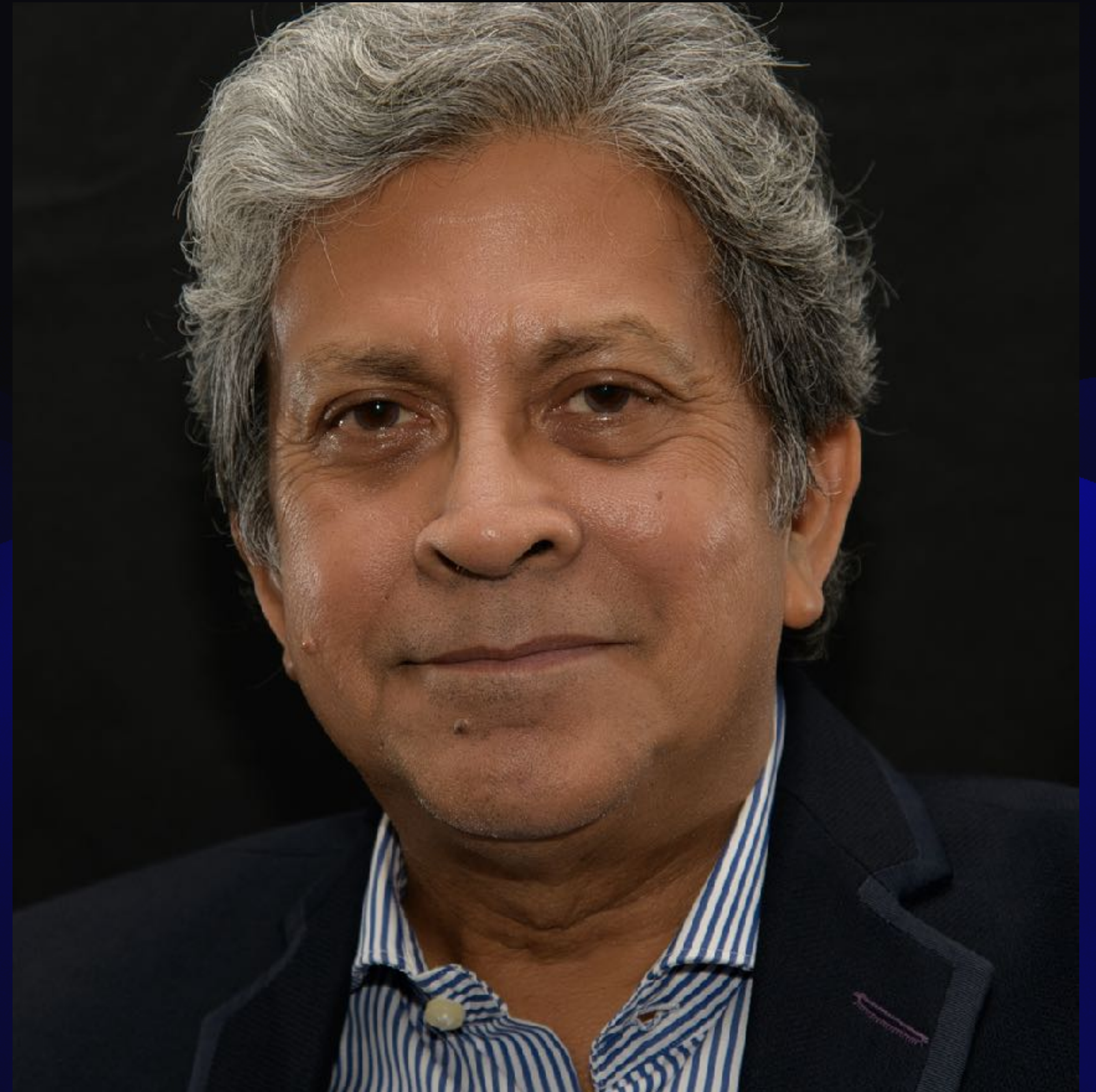


St John's Alumni vs VIOBA 2024

Credits: Tunku Mahmood Fawzy 2024

Corporate standalone professional

- Driven exclusively by rewards
- They bring skill sets that are not readily available in the organisation, the whole is sometimes better than the individual
- Presented with the problem statement
 - Get on with the work
- Solved and
- Move on to the next opportunity
- No overhang or hang ups



Issues and Risk Management

Issues

- Time - It can take too long to build
- Burn out
- Costly to maintain
- May require multiple reward systems
- Elitism vs egalitarian
- Culture
- Multi generational challenges
- Trust is difficult to build
- Macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainty
- Increased business complexity
- Ambiguity
- Training challenges

Risk Management

- Risk of human capital flight,
- Risk of power struggles and conflict,
- Risk of alienation - wider disenfranchised community
- Dysfunctional behaviours - competitive vs collaborative
- Culture mismatch risk - Inclusivity vs Exclusivity

**There is no panacea for team
building**

Wrap up and thank you

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