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THROUGH
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LEADERSHIP

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LAURA LOZZA,
MANAGING PARTNER

\$15



Grooa



The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the forefront of tackling customer challenges

COVER STORY



**LAURA LOZZA,
MANAGING PARTNER**

GROOA

Leading with a Smile

ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE THROUGH COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP

It is always a rock-solid leadership that is the bedrock upon which the success of any company rests. A good leader facilitates and inspires the growth of individual employees and the organisation as a whole. Nevertheless, leading a team is never easy, let alone leading an organisation. Leaders have to know how not to refrain from taking risks. They should also stay open in the face of fierce disagreements, tolerate the uncertainty of crafting a shared solution instead of jumping to their ideas, and most importantly, bear a smiling face even in the wake of the most impending threats. So, in this day and age where the global business scene is driven by fierce competition, how does a leader hold the fort and lead the organisation through inevitable hick-ups and difficulties that set defining examples for others? Helping organisations find the answer to this extremely vital question is Grooa—the cutting-edge European business consultancy specialising in innovative leadership through diversity of ideas.

“We are reinventing the way businesses function in the complex, flat and rapidly changing global workplace by advocating courageous collaborative conversations that help clients implement strategies for sustainable innovation and inclusion-based growth,” states Laura Lozza, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Grooa. By deploying its state-of-the-art proprietary methodology:



We are set to future-proof businesses and help them 'lead with a smile

The C.L.E.A.R.™ Mindset

THE FIVE KEY SKILLS



Clear Presence of Mind

Learn to silence the mental saboteurs that keep you small, in order to be being courageously and actively present



Leading with the Heart

Learn to recognize and channel emotions so that you can respond effectively rather than reacting defensively



Engage and Enquire

Learn to engage and mobilize others with personal power of influence by being intentional, curious, and a skilled negotiator, able to use active listening as well as push/pull techniques



Align in Ambiguity

Learn to confidently "hold the space" by creating a positive and productive environment, to help the system tolerate the ambiguity of co-creation



Resourceful in Innovation

Learn to drive shared ownership and mutual accountability while keeping a flexible focus; especially important for decentralized teams / crowd that need governance, not control.

The C.L.E.A.R. Mindset™ Model, the company helps redesign the internal processes of various organisations while providing the necessary collaborative leadership training. In addition, Grooa also supports the required cultural transformation across the organisation with personalised experiential training, which can also be organised at the Grooa Inspiria Learning Center, a retreat venue in nature. Built to highlight the true value of experiential learning amidst a quiet and inspiring environment, Grooa Inspiria Learning Center is a cozy, homely, and unconventional retreat in the idyllic Dutch countryside that helps leaders spend some mindful moments in nature and organize their team workshops in this immersive and relaxing environment.

A Philosophical Approach to Leadership

Rather than following the footsteps of run-of-the-mill practices based on a traditional view of leadership, the C.L.E.A.R. Mindset™ takes a philosophical stance in leadership as a set of behavioral skills that must be mastered across the entire organisation. The methodology is based

on multidisciplinary studies of cognitive neuroscience, social psychology, multicultural communication and behavioral leadership. It is also grounded in extensive empirical observations by the Grooa Consultants, a diverse team of international business executives who have successfully lead innovative teams and cross-functional collaboration in multicultural contexts. The C.L.E.A.R.™ Mindset Model is built along the lines of trust, self-discovery, interpersonal awareness and focused behavioural training. Articulated in five steps, the C.L.E.A.R. Mindset™ Model's first and foremost postulate is keeping a 'Clear Presence of Mind' that deals with how to keep off self-damaging thoughts and state opinions more assertively with greater clarity. The next step elaborates on 'Leading with Your Heart', or how to manage emotions without allowing automatic reflexes to hijack one's behaviour and the ways one can respond to a provocation without being defensive. Another essential requirement of the model is how it advocates 'Engaging by Asserting and Actively Listening'. This is probably the most important behavioral

transformation: the goal is to learn from each other through engaging and enquiring, not to find out who is right or who wins. Then, as the fourth essential tenet, the model highlights the importance of 'Ambiguity Management' that explores team resilience, so that everyone stays flexible and open to learning while being guided by strong business acumen. Lastly, the model also gives due importance to 'Resourceful Innovation' that elucidates how to conclude the courageous learning conversation on the notes of shared ownership and mutual accountability for the co-created positive change. Following these five essential steps, Grooa helps clients design and implement sustainable business strategies to improve output in terms of productivity, resilience, and innovation while upholding inclusive and courageous interactions.

The Far-Reaching Implications

After shedding light on how the C.L.E.A.R.™ Mindset Model looks on paper, Laura sets forth its implications on real-life business scenarios. For instance, as technology has been gradually

replacing repetitive tasks and removing human errors, many traditional functions are increasingly becoming obsolete, with employees gaining the opportunity to further explore their human abilities in context to creativity, common sense, relationships, or interpretation, among others. This calls for no longer looking at human talents as commodities but as uniquely irreplaceable assets. Against this backdrop, Grooa's C.L.E.A.R.TM Mindset Model suggests an alternative way of enhancing employee performance through guided ownership of personal development. It prompts numerous companies to stop considering top-down evaluations based on one-size-fits-all competences and instead unleash individual talents on respectful conversations to encourage continuous learning.

Alongside, information fatigue is also a concerning issue that involves our entire society at large. In search of quick and clear-cut answers to complex questions, people are busy reaching out to experts online and pitting them against each other. Taking this issue into account, the CLEAR Mindset Methodology explicitly addresses the emerging need to develop the necessary skills to transform disagreements and unproductive conflicts into the co-creation of positive and productive outcomes.

However, it is no more business growth and performance enhancement that a company solely needs to focus on. Attaining the sustainability development goals (SDGs) is the most complex arena where the younger generations are leading while demanding new skills for shared ownership and mutual accountability. Given these emerging yet crucial factors for the success of any business, Grooa, with its ground-breaking methodology, is becoming a trend-setter in the area of sustainability and personal responsibility. "Grooa is helping clients who wish to 'get serious' about SDGs with our strategic and leadership development practices that help them realise those goals," affirms Laura. Besides, the company is also offering executive coaching, mentorships and mindful leadership programs for the top-tier members to re-discover the value of fulfilment and personal choices.

Bearing the Fruits of Success

After continuously assisting companies in various innovative and inclusive strategy implementation and cultural transformations, Grooa has undisputedly added a host of success stories to its portfolio. On that note, Laura recounts when Grooa was onboarded to support a newly promoted commercial director and his team at a regional subsidiary of a large media company. The company selling physical and digital products through various distributors

like Amazon was going through a rough patch, and its CEO was concerned about team productivity and alignment, along with a few conflicts with back-office staff.

As soon as Grooa intervened, they conducted extensive interviews and role-playing exercises to identify a certain level of defensiveness that translated into clashes both with distributors and internally. Initially, the CEO was a bit hesitant about the findings since he surmised that being a leading company in the market, it was impossible for anyone in their organisation to feel defensive. But when Grooa showed a simulation of a key meeting with Amazon, it set forth the vulnerabilities. The distributor was pushing for a discount based on changing consumer demand and their corresponding need to change fee structure with increased costs. The distributor had higher costs, risks, and vulnerabilities, but the media company was also risking its image and customer loyalty by not complying with the distributor's measures. This was when Grooa advised the client to reshape the conversation

in a mutually productive manner where the media company could work in close ties with the distributors and give way to shared monitoring systems and minimise risks together. "We discovered that our client's strategy stated 'defend the market position', whereas we rephrased it into 'continue to support our market position with the strength of our heritage and knowledge'," states Laura. Grooa then trained the client's employees on the art of courageous conversations, and subsequently, the client had reached successful negotiations with distributors that led to improved internal relationships and superseded delivery margins.

Steering ahead into the future, Grooa is stepping outside the confines of a consultancy company to further blow the winds of change across the corporate training and coaching space. To that

end, the company has created LIS WOMAN, a network for international businesswomen at C-suite or board level to help them leave a greater impact on the global business landscape. The program offers peer-to-peer mentoring, inspirational webinars, vertical leadership development training, and loads of other informal opportunities to grow within the membership. In the meantime, leveraging its unique and effective methodology topped with world-class business expertise, a solid science base for applying the most recent advances in behavioural and cognitive neuroscience, and co-active coaching skills, Grooa will continue to foster an inclusive and productive culture on well managed healthy disagreements. "We are set to future-proof businesses and help them 'lead with a smile'," concludes Laura, as she echoes the resounding words of the company's motto. **HR**



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