

Prof. Harshita Shah  
28/11/13

Note:

Open Book Examination

All Questions are compulsory. No doubts/clarifications shall be entertained.  
In case of doubts/clarifications, make reasonable assumptions and proceed

Time: 2.00 hours

Total Marks: 40

Human Behaviour at Work

Case 1: Sir Richard Branson: The Development of an Entrepreneur

Virgin is one of the most respected brands in Great Britain and is rapidly becoming an important global brand as well. The Virgin Brand was started in the 1970s with a small mail order record company that grew out of a student magazine. Since then Richard Branson has developed the Virgin brand into a veritable entrepreneurial empire.

**Branson: The Background of a Developing Entrepreneur:** In the first chapter of his autobiography, Richard Branson reminisces about some of his childhood experiences- ones that would have a profound effect on his development as an adult and an entrepreneur. Branson writes that his parents, especially his mother, continually set challenges for him and his sisters, Vanessa and Lindi, in order to make them independent. These challenges were physical in nature rather academic. According to Branson, he and his sisters were soon setting physically challenges for themselves.

A loving family played an important an important role in Branson's development. "We were a family that would have killed for each other-and we still are," says Branson. Teamwork was also a hallmark for the family. Branson's parents treated him and his two sisters as equals. They valued their children's opinions and only provided advice when the children's opinions and only provided advice when the children asked for it. Branson's mother was very entrepreneurial, as was his Aunt Clare. Each developed several different ways of making money.

Despite his enormous entrepreneurial success, Branson still lacks a high school diploma. In school, he was a pitiful student but a superb athlete. Though he was a dyslexic and had vision problems, his inability to read, write, and spell, and his poor performance on tests were blamed on stupidity or laziness. In commenting on Branson's academic miseries as a child in relation to his athletic and future entrepreneurial successes, one observer noted:

*In this end, it was the tests that failed. They totally missed his ability and passion for sports. They had no means to identify ambition, the fire inside that drives people to find a path to success that zigzags around the maze of standard doors that won't open. They never identified the most important talent of all. It's the ability to connect with people, mind to mind, and soul to soul. It's that were rare power to energize the ambitions of others so that they too, rise to the level of their dreams.*

A passion for sports, adventure, family, and entrepreneurship define Sir Richard's life. Branson has broken several air and land speed and distance records while racing boats and hot air balloons in his pursuit of adventure. His structures his work schedule so that he has ample time to spend with his family and friends. Indeed, Branson's efforts to synthesize work, play, and life seem to be the hallmark of his business model and business success.

**Branson: The Entrepreneur** - Branson began building his entrepreneurial empire in his teenage years. At the age of 17, being frustrated with the rules and regulations of schools and brimming with activism, Branson and a friend, Jonny Gems, started a magazine called Student. The magazine tied many schools together and focused on the students themselves rather than the schools. After publishing the first issue of student, Branson received a note from the headmaster of the school that he and Gems attended. The headmaster wrote "Congratulations, Branson. I predict that you will either go to prison or become a millionaire."

Branson dropped out school and continued to peruse his entrepreneurial interests. His next venture was a discount music business called Virgin Records. Then entrepreneurial venture after entrepreneurial

venture developed, and as the saying goes: "The rest is history!" Sir Richard-Knighted by the Queen of England in 2000- has mostly majority stakes in over 200 companies that constitute his \$7.9 billion entrepreneurial empire. The companies cut across a diverse array of business lines, including Virgin Atlantic Airlines, Virgin Books, Virgin Limousines, Virgin Megastores, Virgin Vacations, Necker Island, Radio Free Virgin, Virgin Cola, and V2 Music, among numerous others.

Branson is not a conventional businessperson- and he never intended to be one. In fact, Sir Richard is about as far removed from the stereotypic CEO as one can possibly imagine. "He continues to be a corporate iconoclast, defying conventional wisdom, pushing the envelope, poking fun at the big guys, saying exactly what he thinks and doing exactly what he wants." Branson has irreverence for authority that he claims to have inherited from both of his parents. Branson relishes becoming involved in "industries that charge too much (music) or hold consumers hostage (cellular) or treat them badly and bore them to tears (airlines)." His aim is to upset the status quo in these kinds of industries.

Branson relishes teamwork and brings it into play in his entrepreneurial ventures. He has an "advisory team, whose job is to capture his entrepreneurial ideas and wrestle them into some kind of corporate structure that is both attractive to investors and palatable to him". Branson also gives others opportunities to develop their ideas into business ventures that he backs.

Sir Richard's entrepreneurial ventures and work piques his intellectual curiosity and provides the education he was never able to get in school. What really sets him apart from other CEOs is that he doesn't mind surprises. He thrives on them. Start-up problems don't bother him at all. Neither do unforeseen battles."

Answer the following two questions (no option)

Total Marks 15

- Using the various personality theories, how would you describe Sir Richard Branson's personality? (7.5)
- What perceptions have you formed of Richard Branson? To what extent have the barriers to social perception influenced your view of Branson? (7.5)

#### Case 2: Sarkar

With a slight frown on his face, Kirti Basu eased back into his chair. His boss, Nandan Sampat, Vice President of research and systems at A&J Bank, had just left for Powai office. Sampat had asked Basu's opinion about Jammeet Singh, the programmer analyst, who worked for them. Sampat indicated that the bank president Jagdish Kesari thought that Singh should be fired. Sampat asked Basu to think about the situation and give him some ideas.

**BACKGROUND:** At the time Kirti Basu was completing his doctoral programme in finance, a member of the graduate faculty encouraged him to interview for the economist position at A&J Bank. He took the advice and applied for the position. As part of the selection process, Basu travelled to the bank and interviewed with Nandan Sampat, Vice President of research and systems, and Jagdish Kesari, President and CEO. Basu felt very positive after the interviews and was excited by the prospect of working with both men on some new projects. A few weeks after the interview trip, A&J Bank offered Basu, the position and he accepted.

His title was bank economist. The bank was in the process of developing a planning programme. Sampat wanted Basu on board and working as soon as possible because the bank needed a system for gathering and analysing market information. Sampat worked with Basu to outline the project. Basu expended substantial effort on the market analysis system even before finishing his degree and working full-time at the bank.

**SETTLING IN ON THE JOB:** In the course of their working together, Sampat informed Basu that Jyoti Sarkar, the bank's programmer-analyst, would be available to help with the computer implementation of Basu's work. When he arrived at the bank, Basu was introduced to Sarkar and scheduled some time, with him. Basu wanted to assess the type of help Sarkar could provide in using the computer to implement both the information gathering and analysis systems.

Basu's initial assessment of Sarkar was not particularly favourable. During their early conversations, Sarkar made several snide remarks about economists. He also made some off-hand comments about Basu's appearance. Basu didn't mind a little give-and-take in the office among good friends, but he felt that Sarkar's

comments were inappropriate in dealing with someone he had just met. However, Basu soon became aware that Sarkar had the technical ability to get the output Basu needed out of an overtaxed computer system.

After being on the job for a short time, Basu found that the bank had no internal graphics capability. Because substantial amounts of graphics were needed to illustrate the bank's market analyses, Basu asked for permission to hire someone to provide them. Kesari approved the request, and Basu called the local institute to get the names of the two top illustrators in the current class of design students. Basu telephoned one of the students, Jagat, about doing the illustration work; he indicated that he was very interested. Basu was favourably impressed during the telephone interview and asked Jagat to come to the bank with some samples of this work.

The next day Basu had just entered his office and sat down to work. When Sampat came in, he said, "Jagdish wants to know what that thing is that is sitting in the bank waiting area." Basu replied, "What do you mean?" Sampat answered, "Jagdish stuck his head in my office and made that statement. I called the secretary, and she said the person was waiting to meet with you." Basu then said, "Oh, that must be Jagat. What's the problem?" Sampat replied, "The person has on frayed cutoffs and a ripped T-shirt." Sampat then left, and Basu asked the secretary to show Jagat into his office. Jagat showed Basu his work. Basu liked it and told him that he would contact him in the near future.

Basu then visited with Kesari and indicated that he would like to hire Jagat. Kesari reluctantly agreed but indicated that Jagat was "not to work at the bank." Basu would have to go to the institute to work with him. Basu indicated that this would be acceptable to him. As he had already spent large amounts of time at the institute library gathering information, it would work out fine. Jagat was hired and started working the next week.

Basu's working relationship with Jagat was excellent. The illustrator had great ideas, and Basu, used them to illustrate his market analyses. At one point, in response to a few basic ideas from Basu, Jagat designed an impressive cover for a publication to be sent out by the bank. Kesari suggested that Basu submit the publication to an inter bank publication design competition that Kesari thought it "would have a good chance of winning." After Basu pointed out that the design was Jagat's work and that he would have to go to the trade meeting to accept any award, Kesari decided not to submit the publication.

As Basu settled into his daily work routine, he soon learned what commuting in a large metropolitan area was all about. His drive to work the first morning had been pure frustration. He had spent 20 minutes stop on the freeway, had difficulty finding a parking place, and had arrived at the bank at 9:30 A.M. instead of the 9:00 A.M. starting time.

After fighting traffic for the first few weeks, Basu worked out an informal flexitime arrangement with Sampat and Kesari. Basu had arrived at the bank at 7:00 A.M. one morning and noticed that the drive was much more pleasant at that time of day. Sampat and Kesari agreed that there was no reason he couldn't come to work early every morning and then leave earlier in the afternoon. Basu was an early morning person, so he jumped at the chance and began coming in at 7:00 A.M. and leaving at 3:00, P.M., which eliminated his frustration with the traffic congestion.

**WORKING WITH SARKAR:** The flexitime arrangement worked out beautifully for Basu. It had removed one frustration from his life, and he was now trying to decide how to remove another. Sarkar's overbearing behaviour towards him hadn't improved. Sarkar had even left a few jobs at the project that Basu and Sampat completed. Some of the jobs were somewhat painful. Overall, his assessment of Sarkar was that he was technically well qualified and could be very helpful. Basu did feel, however, that working with Sarkar directly could be challenging. His attitude towards Basu was one of superiority. He did not hesitate to attack Basu on either personal or professional grounds at nearly every opportunity. Basu recognized the situation as both a challenge and an opportunity. He viewed Sarkar as a potentially positive resource, but one who lacked interpersonal skills. Basu didn't mention his concerns to either Sampat or Kesari, but he had real concerns about a long-term working relationship with Sarkar. After several negative exchanges, Basu wanted to establish some less confrontational way to interact with him. Following several weeks of relaxed and productive mornings, Basu realized that not being around Sarkar for the first two hours of each day was

pleasant. Then one morning Basu wrote a detailed memo concerning the work he wanted Sarkar to complete and left it in Sarkar's mailbox. Sarkar reacted positively to the memo, so Basu began communicating with Sarkar through detailed memos. These memos took more time than face-to-face oral communication, but they forced Basu to think through what he wanted accomplished. He had inadvertently found a way to accomplish his goals and to use Sarkar and his excellent computer skills effectively. The situation evolved into a comfortable working relationship. Early each morning, Basu arrived at the office before the others, wrote his memos, and left them in Sarkar's mail before he arrived. Basu felt good about the working arrangement. Sarkar was quite productive and Basu didn't have his day ruined by negative encounters with him. Basu's projects were proceeding well, and Sarkar became an important link in the information gathering system.

**DISCUSSION ABOUT SARKAR:** Nandan Sampat walked into Basu's office, closed the door, and asked: "What is your evaluation of Sarkar?" Basu answered, "He does a lot of work for me." Sampat then said, "He does a lot of work for me, too. How do you like working with him?" Basu responded, "I've developed a comfortable way of interacting with him to do my work." Sampat then said, "Jagdish thinks he has to go. Jagdish says that Sarkar has everyone upset, everyone from those of us at the top on through to the secretaries." Basu thought for a moment and then responded, "Letting him go would be a mistake. He is technically very competent and would be difficult to replace."

Basu then suggested that Sarkar be put on the night shift where he could work at his leisure with the computer and interact less directly with the people for whom he performed services. Basu pointed out that this move would have the added advantage of employing Sarkar when the overtaxed computer was less busy. Bank personnel could communicate with Sarkar in writing, just as he had been doing successfully for some time. This move would also free up additional computer time for Sampat and Basu during the day when they sometimes needed the computer for work that didn't require Sarkar's services. Sampat thought that Basu's suggestion was excellent and said that he would pass it on to Kesari.

Later, Sampat returned to Basu's office with a dejected look on his face. He announced, "Jagdish says he feels the bank can't afford the luxury of employing Sarkar if he is not available for work while the other employees are around." As he turned to leave, Sampat ended the conversation by saying, "Jagdish may be open to other suggestions. Think about this and give me some ideas." And with that he walked out the door.

Questions (Any three -5 Marks each) Total Marks-15

- A. How would you characterize the management style and culture at *A&J Bank*?
- B. Should the bank managers have attempted to change Sarkar's behaviour? Explain.
- C. What do you think of the way Jagat was treated by the bank? Should he have been managed differently? Explain.
- D. What should Kirti Basu do now?

**Case 3: Throwing Away a Golden Opportunity :** Roger Allen was a man on the move. Everyone in the firm felt that someday he would be company president. To listen to his boss, Harry Walden, it was only a matter of time before Roger would be at the helm. The current president of the firm was a marketing person. She had worked her way up from field salesperson to president by selling both the product and her competency to customers and the company alike. In a manner of speaking, the marketing department was the "well-oiled" road to the top. Roger was the number one salesperson and, according to the grapevine, was due to get Harry Walden's job when the latter retired in two years. However, Roger was not sure that he wanted to be vice president of marketing. Another slot was opening up in international sales. Roger knew nothing about selling to Europe, but this was the firm's first venture outside the United States, and he thought he might like to give it a try. He talked to Harry about it, but the vice president tried to discourage him. In fact, Harry seemed to think that Roger was crazy to consider the job at all. "Roger," he said, "that's no place for you. Things are soft and cozy back here. You don't have to prove yourself to anyone. You're number one around here. Just sit tight and you'll be president. Don't go out and make some end runs. Just keep barreling the middle for four yards on each carry, and you'll score the big touch down." Roger was not convinced.

He thought perhaps it would be wise to discuss the matter with the president herself. This he did. The president was very interested in Roger's ideas about international marketing. "If you really think you'd like to head up this office for us, I'll recommend you for the job."

After thinking the matter over carefully, Roger decided that he would much rather go to Europe and try to help establish a foothold over there than sit back and wait for the stateside opening. He told his decision to Harry. "Harry, I've talked to the president, and she tells me that this new opening in international sales is really going to get a big push from the company. It's where the action is. I realize that I could sit back and take it easy for the next couple of years, but I think I'd rather have the international job." Harry again told Roger that he was making a mistake. "You're throwing away a golden opportunity. However, if you want it, I'll support you."

A week later, when the company selected someone else from sales to head the international division, Roger was crushed. The president explained the situation to him in this way: "I thought you wanted the job pushed for you. However, the other members of the selection committee voted against me. I can tell you that you certainly didn't sell Harry very strongly on your idea. He led the committee to believe that you were really undecided about the entire matter. In fact, I felt rather foolish telling them how excited you were about a the whole thing, only to have Harry say he'd talked to you since that time and you weren't that sure at all. When Harry got done, the committee figured you had changed your mind after talking to me, and they went on to discuss other likely candidates."

Discussion Questions (any two- 5 marks each) Total Marks-10

- 1) Who had power in this organization? What type of power did Harry Walden have?
- 2) Do you think Roger played company politics well? If so, why didn't he get the international sales job?
- 3) At this point, what would you do if you were Roger? What political strategies could be used?

reverse-dependence to avoid ~~possibility~~ progress as the goal of Harry Walden's ~~term~~