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# About Suresh Babu

Suresh is the Founder and CEO of <u>Web Marketing Academy</u> (<u>WMA</u>), Bangalore which offers certification courses in digital marketing. The institute trains students, professionals & corporate personnel.

An enthusiastic digital marketer, Suresh has been in the field since 2002. A lot has changed in the last 10-15 years - from online marketing strategy to tools to measuring ROI - and he's had to keep pace as well as anyone.

In this eBook, he shares some of his learning and gives actionable steps and resources that'll make you a modern digital marketer as well.



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# 1. Learn to adapt



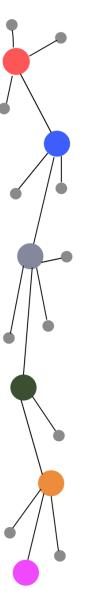
Adapt to the latest trends. Don't be afraid to try the newest marketing tools and platforms. Never mind if you fail in your initial attempts; learn from your mistakes and correct the course.

Find a way to use latest trending platforms to your and your customers' advantage.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- <u>Periscope</u> live broadcasting mobile app for Android and iPhone
- Blab.im a live streaming platform that enables public video chat with 4 participants at a time.
- Meerkat live streaming app that made it big at SXSW 2015

- ✓ Install Periscope, Meerkat or Blab right now.
- ✓ Start live streaming whatever you are doing.
- ✓ If you're shy, just broadcast what you're reading this article.
- Keep talking and interact with people tuning in.



# 2. Surround yourself with smart people

As someone real smart said, if you're the smartest in your company, move out.

Associating with smart people has an induction effect – some of their skills and energy rubs off on you and you find greater momentum for your ideas and thoughts. It's synergetic.

Learn from the smartest people around the world as well through videos, podcasts, blogs, webinars, workshops, and more. That's the gold of the internet age – no boundaries to learning.

# **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- <u>Startup Saturday</u> part of Headstart Network, held on the second Saturday of every month, across Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai
- OME community an online marketing enthusiast's group started by me; that has some networking and upskilling events every month
- Events around <u>Social Media Day</u> and <u>Social Media Week</u> (SMW) – held across cities in India and the world. SMW 2015 is scheduled on November 16-20 in Mumbai. We <u>celebrated Social Media Day</u> recently in Bangalore

- Register for an upcoming event.
- ✓ Be participative, not a passive listener.
- ✓ Talk to some of the speakers.
- ✓ Talk to other people
  attending the event. You
  never know how
  connections work out
  sometimes!





# 3. Don't rely on any one channel alone

Never ever put all your eggs in one basket. And don't get too comfortable.

What's working today may break tomorrow. Keep an open mind and jump onto newest platforms used by your target audience. If it works for them, you need to ramp up as well. At the same time, let go of what's not getting you any ROI.

Use multiple marketing channels to get your customer's attention.

Use email, social, mobile – whatever it takes to deliver value, build loyalty and achieve your business objectives.

## **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Run email marketing campaigns– MailChimp
- Experiment on social media –
   <u>Facebook</u>, <u>YouTube</u>, <u>Twitter</u>,
   <u>Pinterest</u>, <u>Instagram</u>, <u>Snapchat</u>,
   <u>Google+</u>
- Explore new and trending platforms – <u>Periscope</u>, <u>Dubsmash</u>
- Get on to mobile marketing –
   Google's <u>The Mobile Playbook</u>
- Upgrade your SEO skills –
   Mashable, MarketingLand

- ✓ Start building your own email list.
- ✓ Start working on a newsletter.
- Build a content calendar for all your marketing channels.





# 4. Build loyal fans on your own property

Keep in mind that there's a difference between a rented place and home. You got great engagement going on your Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram ... (the list could get endless) social pages? That's great. But they're rented places at the mercy of the landlords.

Your website is your home.

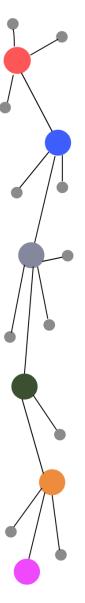
That's where you need to focus – get the visitors there, convert leads, engage, nurture, retain and delight – all on your website.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Create landing pages that convert on your website – <u>Unbounce</u>
- Mobile Friendly Test to analyze the mobile usability of your website and improve on it
- <u>PageSpeed Insights</u> to check the web performance of your website on mobile and desktop



- Brainstorm on downloadable content for lead generation.
- Create effective landing pages.
- Run ads to promote your website, blog and other resources.
- Test your website on desktop and mobile devices.
- Analyze your website usage on Google Analytics.
- ✓ Build a content calendar to be a consistent content publisher.



# 5. Build your plans and campaigns on data

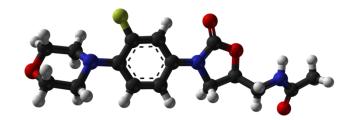
Embrace web analytics as your best friend. No digital marketer is any good till he or she has grasped the true essence of analytical tools.

Web analytics is not clickstream alone, its intelligence delivered via platforms you need to master and derive sense from.

Your marketing campaigns will help you achieve business objectives better if you understand the driving forces on your website, the behavior of your customers, the acquisition patterns on online and offline campaigns, and of course, the end ROI – cost versus revenue – all of which will come from digital analytics.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Google Analytics powerful free tool for your website, mobile app and other customer touchpoints
- <u>Facebook Insights</u> to understand your Facebook audience
- <u>Twitter Analytics</u> to discover content that engages people
- <u>Social media analytics</u> free and paid for all social media networks



- Look at the analytics data of your website, social media networks, etc.
- Check for the most viewed blog post in the last 90 days.
- Reconsider your digital marketing strategy based on the user behaviors observed.
- Increase or decrease budget, change times of launch, revamp content strategy and content formats optimize your campaigns based on the analytical results.
- ✓ Remove channels that do not generate results (assuming you've give it adequate time).



# 6. Create content for a highly targeted audience

Not every piece of content needs to serve the whole of your target audience. In fact, if you want higher returns on your content marketing strategy, segment your customers and build content for niche groups.

For example, we run a training academy for digital marketers but we published a blog post on travel advice for people attending events in India. That got a lot of eyeballs and generated traffic to our website, and leads.

## **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Google Instant a feature that predicts what you're searching for and shows results as you type
- YouTube Trends Dashboard find what videos are trending in countries and specific age groups of viewers
- Google Trends find trending topics on the web















# Google Analytics

- Talk to your customers and find out what their questions are.
- ✓ Take one question and create a video, blog post or other form of content to provide a solution.
- Use Google Instant type your keywords slowly letter by letter and see the suggestions that come up.
- Use paid mediums
   (Facebook ads, etc.) to
   promote useful, engaging
   content for your target
   audience.



# 7. Invest your time and effort towards long-term goals

It's tempting to take shortcuts to achieve short-term goals. Skip the edit and publish that article on time to meet the weekly goal. Use black hat SEO to get the needed traffic and show the client your effort got results!

# STOP!

Taking shortcuts is a waste of time and money. Not to mention, the potential blot on your hard-earned reputation! Why take that risk?

Instead, focus on long-term goals, work on a long-term strategy and plan, and then execute the plan meticulously.

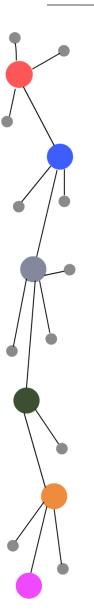
## **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Study <u>Webmaster Guidelines</u> to ensure you do not violate any, accidentally or intentionally
- Google Search Console to ensure your SEO efforts are working
- Specific resources to improve ranking of content on specific platforms YouTube, Linkedin, <a href="Instagram">Instagram</a>, etc.



- Optimize your content across your owned assets – website, social media, etc., to improve ranking organically.
- Keep an eye out for latest trends.
- Experiment with new marketing channels and content formats.
- Create some videos team,
   CEO, etc., and use them to engage your audience.





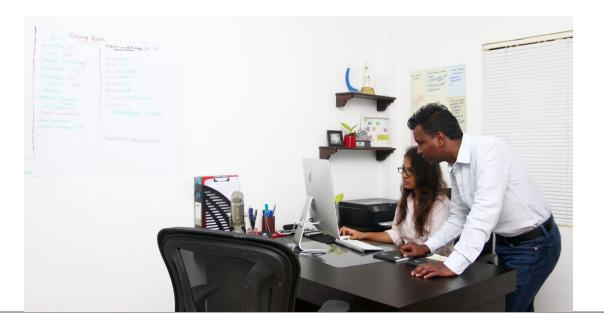
# 8. Train and mentor others

We like to think we're indispensable but a true leader is one who can make his team function just as well in his absence.

Train others to take on responsibilities and execute tasks with complete ownership. Be a support and guide but don't hand hold.

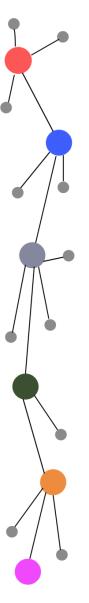
# **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- <u>Linkedin post</u> Read up on how mentoring impacts both student and teacher
- Read up on how to be a good mentor
- Talk to your own mentors



- ✓ Spend 10-15 minutes a week to mentor, train your friend or colleague in something that you are good at.
- Check your Linkedin emails.
   Sometimes people just need guidance.
- ✓ Follow up.





# 9. Ignore the haters, be open minded about the criticism

In the age of social networking, haters and trolls find it only too easy to be spiteful and negative. Ignore it. This is the negative side of the internet. Don't give it attention and focus on the positives.

If you receive negative feedback and criticism, analyze it objectively. If there is a grain of truth in the criticism, accept your mistake, address the problem, improve and keep going forward.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Social listening tools to hear what's being said about your brand – <u>TweetDeck</u>, <u>Google</u> <u>Alerts</u>, <u>Icerocket</u>, <u>Social Mention</u>, <u>Topsy</u>
- Find places to promote your content <u>Buzzsumo</u>



- ✓ Search for your brand name using the abovementioned tools.
- Check for misspellings, positive and negative sentiment.
- Search on relevant industry keywords.
- Respond to good and bad comments – with bad being more important.
- ✓ Incorporate learning from negative comments.
- Participate in a conversation.



# 10. Don't ever complain - in online or offline mode

Never mind how disappointed, angry or hurt you are, don't let it out as a grouse – on online or offline media.

Present your case calmly and in a positive manner, whether it's to your senior or junior. Complaining is finger pointing. That's negative. It creates a perception of your character.

Be the problem solver or the problem manager, never the grouse.

If its excess work that's bothering you, find a way to increase productivity.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Use social media tools to schedule posts – <u>Hootsuite</u>, <u>Buffer</u>, etc.
- Use collaboration tools such as
   <u>Evernote</u>, <u>Trello</u>, <u>Slack</u>, <u>DropBox</u>,
   <u>Google Calendar</u>, etc. to increase
   efficiency



- Identify one problem that hampers your productivity time management, content organization, team communication, etc.
- ✓ Find a tool to help Google Calendar, Evernote, Trello, etc.
- Set up tasks on the tool and test for a week. Measure the impact.
- ✓ Delegate tasks where your expertise is not required.



# 11. Keep your cool in critical situations

Unpredictable things can and will happen. The Wi-Fi network, during your workshop, won't work! The mike you requested won't be available! This is the time **not** to hit the panic button.

Recently, we arranged for a conference at a large company. About 100 people were expected to arrive. At the last minute, the company could not make the conference room available. The presenters were at a loss. When they called, I asked them to look at the nearest hotels and find space. Meanwhile, take the few people who had arrived out for coffee and get them to network.

When you panic, your brain freezes. A critical situation is the worst time for that to happen!

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Observe and learn from your mentors
- If your job is high stress and managing crisis is part of the game – get crisis management training
- Find what works for your mental peace – yoga, music, medication, walking, etc.
- Read books, watch videos, study how crisis is managed across corporate

- ✓ Next time, something unpredictable happens, resolve to manage it.
- ✓ Anticipate things that can go wrong and have a Plan B.
- Take a deep breath and focus all your energy on working out a solution.





# 12. Have long-term objectives but be flexible with short-term strategies

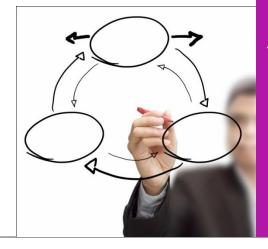
My long-term plan for the year was to evangelize digital marketing and get more students on board. I had considered a number of strategies to achieve these goals. We had a plan set out.

Three months back, I got onto Periscope. Before I knew it, Periscope became the channel for me to spread awareness about digital marketing – which in turn brought more students into WMA as well. We also began podcasting actively, something we hadn't really considered at the beginning of the year.

Our long-term objective remains unchanged but our short-term strategies have been readjusted. And that's fine!

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Build a marketing plan <u>Should a</u> <u>marketing plan be fixed or</u> flexible?
- Keep tabs on what's hot in digital marketing – <u>MarketingLand</u>, <u>Digital India Podcast</u> (by staff and students at WMA), <u>CMO.com</u>, <u>Mashable</u>, <u>MarketingTech</u>



- ✓ On a chart map out your long term and short term goals. (It helps to work backwards from your longterm goal if you're just starting.)
- Write all the steps to achieve the short-term goalsdaily, weekly, monthly.
- Build a path showing how your short-term goal will help you reach long-term objectives.
- Revise short-term goals every month based on outcome analysis of previous campaigns, market changes, internal movements, new trends, etc.





# 13. Cut the emotion out of decisions

I know how hard this can be. Sometimes, situations can get really tough. Whenever people get together, tricky situations are bound to arise. You may be riled about something yourself. But how do you deal with it?

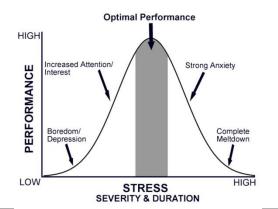
**My advice:** First and foremost, accept your own emotional state. Understand that you need a breather.

Where possible, take a timeout. Gather information from multiple sources and analyze the data without emotion.

When a timeout is not possible, take a deep breath and be as objective as possible. You'll get better with experience, no shortcuts here.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Remember history how many bad situations could have been avoided if leaders did not get emotional? Why Good Leaders Make Bad Decisions
- Be emotionally intelligent, not emotional. Read up on <u>How</u> <u>Successful People Stay Calm</u>
- If you must show anger, <u>focus on</u> the action, not person



- ✓ Feeling out of temper?Accept it.
- Before taking any action, consider its impact on people around you.
- Listen to yourself talk if you have time for it before a press release, meeting, etc.
- ✓ If you've written in the heat of the moment, save the email or Facebook post.

  Come back to it in 10 minutes.
- ✓ Focus on collecting data rather than taking a decision instantly.
- Call a group meeting and take a combined decision.





# 14. Be empathetic

Never forget the other person's position. Remember how it feels to sit on the other side of the table.

Take off your shoes and put on someone else's, well, not literally but you get my point. Be a listener, be approachable, be willing to help, and be fair.

In return, you'll get loyalty, honesty and commitment.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Empathy is good for you and your business - Why the Empathetic Leader Is the Best Leader
- Book <u>Leaders Eat Last: Why</u>
   <u>Some Teams Pull Together and</u>
   <u>Others Don't</u> by Simon Sinek
- Why Empathy Is The Force That Moves Business Forward
- Encourage empathy with <u>team</u> <u>building activities</u>



- Practice mindfulness be in the present moment and pay attention consciously without being judgmental. A simple example is to close your eyes and feel the air flow through your body as you inhale and exhale.
- Never make fun of sensitive issues and situations.
- ✓ Listen to your friend, spouse, peer or child – do this mindfully. Just listen and try to see the situation from their perspective.
- ✓ Join communities.



# 15. Show the way and then get out of it

The best way to train others is to get your own hands dirty.

Make mistakes, play with concepts, tech or strategies – thrash it out as much as you can. Show your team what is possible, set standards, and then let them get on with it.

Don't micro-manage and ruin the innovation that could come out of their professional freedom.

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Read up on <u>Leadership Tips:</u>
   <u>Effective Delegation Process</u> –
   <u>Dale Carnegie blog</u> (world renowned trainer and author)
- Also <u>How to Delegate The Right</u>
   <u>Tasks To The Right People</u> Brian
   Tracy, Chairman and CEO of *Brian Tracy International* for training
   and development of individuals
   and organizations



- ✓ List out tasks that you can delegate.
- ✓ Select people you will delegate tasks to.
- ✓ Train them on the tasks.
- Assign responsibilities, KPIs and expectations.
- Give complete ownership but keep the window of guidance open at all times.
- ✓ Allow scope for innovation and enterprise.





# 16. Don't be a hypocrite

Don't preach what you don't practice. That's never really worked for anyone in the past but in the age of the millennial generation, it's the fastest way to lose respect.

You're not perfect so don't pretend to be. Be yourself, with your shortcomings.

That doesn't mean you don't work on your weaknesses. You do and you also help others work on theirs. Just don't patronize.

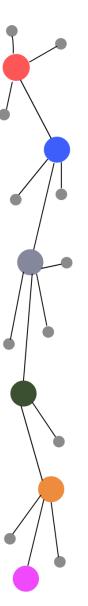


### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- While we have many domestic examples as well, no one has penned them down as entertainingly. Watch: <u>Jon</u> <u>Stewart Blast the Hypocrisy of</u> <u>World Leaders at the Paris</u> <u>Solidarity Rally</u>
- Read up on <u>Hypocrisy Isn't</u><u>Going to Get You There</u>
- Article When leaders fail to "walk the talk": Supervisor undermining and perceptions of leader hypocrisy

- ✓ Accept your own
   weaknesses are you a
   procrastinator, the last
   person to reach or the
   constant interrupter?
   Swallow the bitter pill; it'll
   make you a better leader.
- As a business, are you into yourselves more than customer centric?
- ✓ Be mindful of your weakness – catch yourself when you do it and abstain.
- Don't expect others to follow where you can't lead.
- ✓ Don't advise on topics you know nothing about.





# 17. Be ready to break the rules

Rules are made to improve performance, streamline workflows, and enhance productivity.

When a rule starts hindering rather than helping, it's time to let it go.

Keep your rules relevant and useful – that's the key to ensure they're followed willingly. Revisit rules often.

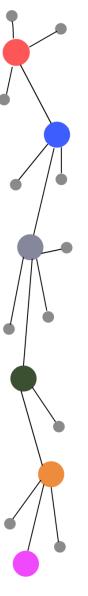


### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- In India, we are often victims of antiquated laws and lawmakers who don't trouble to keep systems updated with the times
- Read up: <u>Time to break some</u>
   <u>rules</u> and <u>I Broke These 6</u>
   <u>Business Rules</u>. Why You Should,
   <u>Too.</u> rules that should be
   broken in sales and marketing
   strategies.
- Informative article on Harvard
   Business Review <u>If You Want</u>
   <u>Honesty, Break Some Rules</u>

- First, do you have rules? Since not everyone in a business is mature by default, sometimes you need rules.
- ✓ Are all your rules in keeping with the times? Do you enforce formal wear and your employees hate it?
- Analyze if rules are helping or hurting your employees or customers?
- Are rules leading to bitter customer relationships?
- Revisit rules weed out the pointless.





# 18. Be a good communicator

It is extremely important for marketers to communicate, and communicate well.

Never mind whether it is internal or external communication. Never mind the format of the communication – email, meeting, public address, etc., marketers must know how to communicate clearly, succinctly, and comprehensively.

If communication is your weakness, get help. Join a class, find a mentor, read self-help books, practice privately or before friends – do whatever it takes to improve. **This is priority.** 

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Watch TED Talks
- <u>Toastmasters Meetups in Bangalore</u>
- Heroic Public Speaking that I attended
- Read up on <u>what I learned at the</u>
   Heroic Public Speaking 2015 event
- Communication courses on Lynda.com



- ✓ Observe people around you who are good communicators.
- ✓ Keep the listener in perspective when you communicate. Do they understand the jargon? Are they familiar with your topic?
- ✓ Don't give too little or too much information.
- Record yourself in video but don't talk into it. Watch the video later and analyze your body language, tone, and clarity.
- Check out the links mentioned in resources.





# 19. Take ownership of your mistakes

Everyone makes mistakes. That's OK.

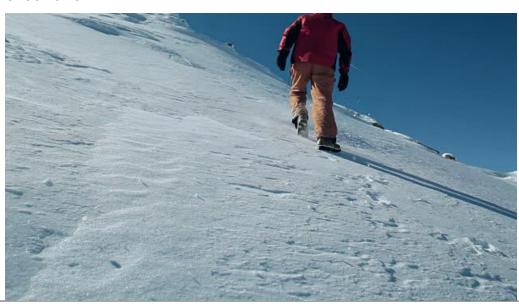
The important thing is to learn from the mistakes. And to do that, you first need to take ownership of your own errors. It's embarrassing, excruciatingly so sometimes.

But if you want to get back on your feet, there's no way around it!

### **RESOURCES FOR YOU**

- Read up: <u>3 Ways Owning Your</u>
   <u>Mistakes Will Make You Powerful</u>
- And <u>Good Employees Make</u>
   <u>Mistakes. Great Leaders Allow</u>

   <u>Them To.</u>
- Watch the <u>Howard Schultz, CEO</u>, <u>Starbucks story</u>



- Accept the mistakes you've made – a wrong hire, bad policy, bad customer service, bad sales decision, etc.
- Learn from it. Write it downseeing things in black and white helps.
- ✓ Do a root cause analysis to find the cause and improve from there.



# Challenge #1

- Install Periscope,
   Meerkat or Blab right now.
- Start live streaming whatever you are doing.
- If you're shy, just broadcast what you're reading – this article.
- Keep talking and interact with people tuning in.

# Challenge #2

- Register for an upcoming event.
- Be participative, not a passive listener.
- Talk to some of the speakers.
- Talk to other people attending the event.
   You never know how connections work out sometimes!

# Challenge #3

- Build your own email list.
- Start working on a newsletter.
- Build a content calendar for all your marketing channels.

# Challenge #4

- Brainstorm on downloadable content for lead generation.
- Create effective landing pages.
- Run ads to promote your website, blog and other resources.
- Test your website on desktop and mobile devices.
- Analyze your website usage on Google Analytics.
- Build a content calendar to be a consistent content publisher.

- Look at the analytics data of your website, social media networks, etc.
- Check for the most viewed blog post in the last 90 days.
- Reconsider your digital marketing strategy based on the user behaviors observed.
- Increase or decrease budget, change times of launch, revamp content strategy and content formats – optimize your campaigns based on the analytical results.
- Remove channels that do not generate results (assuming you've give it adequate time).



# Challenge #6

- Talk to your customers and find out what their questions are.
- Take one question and create a video, blog post or other form of content to provide a solution.
- Use Google Instant type your keywords slowly letter by letter and see the suggestions that come up.
- Use paid mediums
   (Facebook ads, etc.) to
   promote useful,
   engaging content for
   your target audience.

# Challenge #7

- Optimize your content across your owned assets – website, social media, etc., to improve ranking organically.
- Keep an eye out for latest trends.
- Experiment with new marketing channels and content formats.
- Create some videos team, CEO, etc., and use them to engage your audience.

# Challenge #8

- Spend 10-15 minutes a week to mentor, train your friend or colleague in something that you are good at.
- Check your Linkedin emails. Sometimes people just need guidance.
- Follow up.

# Challenge #9

- Search for your brand name using the abovementioned tools.
- Check for misspellings, positive and negative sentiment.
- Search on relevant industry keywords.
- Respond to good and bad comments – with bad being more important.
- Incorporate learning from negative comments.
- Participate in a conversation.

- Identify one problem that hampers your productivity – time management, content organization, team communication, etc.
- Find a tool to help Google Calendar, Evernote, Trello, etc.
- Set up tasks on the tool and test for a week.
   Measure the impact.
- Delegate tasks where your expertise is not required.



# Challenge #11

- Next time, something unpredictable happens, resolve to manage it.
- Anticipate things that can go wrong and have a Plan B.
- Take a deep breath and focus all your energy on working out a solution.

# Challenge #12

- On a chart map out your long term and short term goals. (It helps to work backwards from your long-term goal if you're just starting.)
- Write all the steps to achieve the short-term goals – daily, weekly, monthly.
- Build a path showing how your short-term goal will help you reach long-term objectives.
- Revise short-term goals every month based on outcome analysis of previous campaigns, market changes, internal movements, new trends, etc.

# Challenge #13

- Feeling out of temper?
   Accept it.
- Before taking any action, consider its impact on people around you.
- Listen to yourself talk if you have time for it before a press release, meeting, etc.
- If you've written in the heat of the moment, save the email or Facebook post. Come back to it in 10 minutes.
- Focus on collecting data rather than taking a decision instantly.
- Call a group meeting and take a combined decision.

# Challenge #14

- Practice mindfulness be in the present moment and pay attention consciously without being judgmental. A simple example is to close your eyes and feel the air flow through your body as you inhale and exhale.
- Never make fun of sensitive issues and situations.
- Listen to your friend, spouse, peer or child – do this mindfully. Just listen and try to see the situation from their perspective.
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- List out tasks that you can delegate.
- Select people you will delegate tasks to.
- Train them on the tasks.
- Assign responsibilities, KPIs and expectations.
- Give complete ownership but keep the window of guidance open at all times.
- Allow scope for innovation and enterprise.

# Challenge #16

- Accept your own
   weaknesses are you a
   procrastinator, the last
   person to reach or the
   constant interrupter?
   Swallow the bitter pill;
   it'll make you a better
   leader.
- As a business, are you into yourselves more than customer centric?
- Be mindful of your weakness – catch yourself when you do it and abstain.
- Don't expect others to follow where you can't lead.
- Don't advise on topics you know nothing about.

# Challenge #17

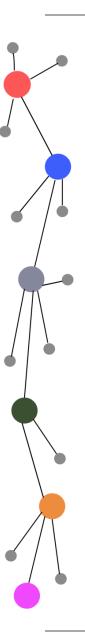
- First, do you have rules? Since not everyone in a business is mature by default, sometimes you need rules.
- Are all your rules in keeping with the times? Do you enforce formal wear and your employees hate it?
- Analyze if rules are helping or hurting your employees or customers?
- Are rules leading to bitter customer relationships?
- Revisit rules weed out the pointless.

# Challenge #18

- Observe people around you who are good communicators.
- Keep the listener in perspective when you communicate. Do they understand the jargon? Are they familiar with your topic?
- Don't give too little or too much information.
- Record yourself in video but don't talk into it. Watch the video later and analyze your body language, tone, and clarity.
- Check out the links mentioned in resources on Page 21.

- Accept the mistakes you've made – a wrong hire, bad policy, bad customer service, bad sales decision, etc.
- Learn from it.
   Document it seeing things in black and white helps.
- Do a root cause analysis to find the cause – and improve from there.





# Thank you

Hope these tips prove helpful in your quest to become a modern digital marketer. Make sure you take up the challenges in earnest to bring out that spark in your skills and capabilities.

Good luck!

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