

# WINNING TRUTHS TO SUCCESS

Razman Ismail, Head of Human Resources of Bank Islam, shares some of his personal insights on the path to success.

By Chow Ee-Tan



One must have a balanced attitude towards success and not take it for granted. This may be a simple truth but to Razman Ismail, Head of Human Resources (HR), Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad, it is of utmost importance and becomes his life and work philosophy.

Sharing some of his strategies on success with *GRADUAN*<sup>®</sup>, Razman offers a few advice from various angles. "To start with, I always tell young people that you must do something that you have passion in," he says. "Young people need to discover and find out what they like. One can't sustain doing something one dislikes, so it's important to continue to explore and understand what it is that you like about a job."

Razman's role as Head of Human Resources sees him leading the division from strategy formulation to effective implementation of HR policies and initiatives, ranging from talent

attraction and development, employees engagement, HR operations, performance management and industrial relations.

The 45-year-old who graduated from Universiti Sains Malaysia in Management majoring in Human Resources, began his career at PwC as a consultant where he undertook various consulting engagements. In 2003, he joined IBM Malaysia where he was a Project Manager for diverse consulting projects. He later joined Bank Negara Malaysia for a brief period of two years before leaving for CIMB Group. He spent almost eight years at CIMB, where he held various HR roles across the Group. Razman then left for Bank Islam in July 2014.

Razman says he enjoys consultancy work as it involves problem-solving from an organisational perspective and this helps make a difference in an organisation. "There was a time I left a job partly because I became uninterested in the job. I was a project manager

for HR-related jobs, and then I was given an IT project to head. It was something I had not much interest in and eventually I left because I found it was not my calling."

He says sometimes one may step on a few toes on the path to success. "I could be seen as a non-conformist. During certain times in my career, I may have stepped on some toes taking certain paths to implement things," he laughs. "Sometimes along the way, there may be noises that distract my attention, but I would rather just focus on what I'm supposed to do. Yes, it might mean you need to take a different path at times," he says.

Razman also points out the importance of working with good and outstanding people. "I have hired some very good people to work for me. The people make a lot of differences as I allow them to be good at what they do. Sometimes they may have different ways of doing things in contrary to what people are used to but I try to get different perspectives from those who work for me. I think we should not be scared of letting someone else excel in what they do," he says.

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Another area that Razman subscribes to is to focus on one's strengths rather than weaknesses. "I agree with renowned speaker Marcus Buckingham who focuses on the strengths in people. While being mindful and aware of one's weaknesses, one should work on and improve your existing strengths. That's what I'm trying to do with my team. If I know someone has certain strengths, I would focus on those strengths. I believe some flexibility should be allowed and we need to cut across job descriptions to tap into the strengths of employees. That is the only way to develop and grow in their career," he says.

Razman is aware that when one is in a leadership position, one needs to always reflect and self-examine. "The ability to reflect is important. The higher the position you are in, the less feedback people tend to give to you. They are afraid of any repercussion even though there may be none. When no one volunteers feedback to you, the more you need to reflect and examine yourself," he says. Every day, Razman himself would set aside time alone to recall the things that have happened at work, on what he has said and done, and how they might have affected anyone positively or negatively.

On a personal note, his faith in God has taught him to persevere even in difficult times as well as having integrity and honesty at work. "Integrity is key; the money we take home must be clean money earned in respectable ways. Such values should be instilled since young. I am glad that where I am now provides inspiration for the workforce to develop good conduct and be capable of performing at a high level of proficiency."

The bottom line for the path to success, he says, is to be consistent and persevere in what one does. "Be great at what you do; don't just be average. When you stop learning and stop improving, that's when you get stagnant. But if you love what you do, it won't take a lot of effort to want to do it well. And always remember that success is only temporary, so you must be level-headed about it," he concludes. 