

Tunisian Talents United Forum, November 23<sup>rd</sup>,  
Cité des métiers, Marseille



**Culture & Mindset Transformation for a  
brighter Future for Tunisia  
Driving Cultural Changes  
Break through leadership skills**

**Welcome Note: Mr. Nejib Zaafrani, TTU  
President, Co - Founder & Chairman at  
Research & Management Solutions**

- The vision is very ambitious, we are looking at critical mass, Tunisian talents are globally competitive, highly demanded and capable of transforming the Country and connecting it to the center of the World. We push for English as language in TTU because we want our youth to master the English language to be globally competitive.
- The mission is enabling and connecting Tunisian talents and leaders to the future, transforming the building blocks of the Country through Human capital that's the biggest asset of our dear Country Tunisia, with the aim of impacting positively people's life.
- TTU started with 22 founding members, we are very careful in our growth, a large number of founders for an association is essential for an association to survive. we grew by 32 members. Our association was created on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Our members' number of years of experience summed up to 1000 when put together and the fields of expertise are and very diverse. The first thing we would like to achieve is to create a platform to attract, develop and mentor best in class Tunisian talents and visionary leaders to turn TTU vision into reality, second to raise awareness around knowledge, as a great value, then set best in class standards of Tunisian talents and visionary leaders and agree on areas of activity of strategic priorities to create value and make a difference for the Tunisian Society.
- We are united to bring change for brighter future for Tunisia, our core activity, is coaching and mentoring potential leaders to excel locally and globally, bring best in class experiences to shape Tunisian talents and then we are very confident that the ground will be very solid. If you could bring the right people together with the needed chemistry they will do miracles, we are independent, apolitical and self-funded by our members, our biggest challenge is to earn Tunisian people's trust and confidence. Leaders groom better leaders, we are great lovers of Tunisia.
- How can we bring talent and grow them together around one common purpose? Some countries value knowledge, some others they are not there yet, knowledge is a strategic value that Leadership must capitalize on to generate tremendous value for the society. We need to value the expertise of people as we value Assets. We want to spend time on young generation and cover the whole Nation.
- We aspire to cover all continents where ever there's talent and bring diversity and good knowledge, we are welcoming members who can share their knowledge and expertise in any sector in any activity and domain. Basically, we start by getting those people united together, they have to be united about one core value and one Logo, one vision and one mission. TTU has four core values, **Integrity, Learning, Respect and Work Value**, it's about achievement, independence, recognition, relationships, support and working conditions.

**Keynote Speaker :** Professor Jean Marie LOCHET, Philosopher, Advisor (Fr. Director of école Normale supérieur, AIX-En-Provence, Fr. Dean Academy of Iles de la réunion

Professor Jean Marie LOCHET presented a philosophic portrait of the mindset of the Entrepreneur Persona, he explained that before becoming an Entrepreneur we are Human. Imagine a skinbag which has vaguely the shape of a Human, on the top a little Man, just below in the middle a wild Lion and underneath a gigantic Octopus. The little Man up is the mind, the Lion is the Heart and the courage, the Octopus is the physical habits. We Human are made of intellectual thoughts and physical foods. The Lion dreams only conquest and power, the Octopus thinks food and sex and above the head would like to think and reflect. A Human is the reconciliation between what he thinks and what dances between the belly and the head. The Man is the one who has regard in himself as a balance to the head, the heart and the belly. And that what makes, the Thinkers, the Leaders and the Defenders.



### **Panel I: Driving cultural changes – Breakthrough leadership skills**

Moderator: Belgacem CHARIAG, President and CEO at PQ Group Holdings, USA. TTU Cofounder & Board Director

#### **Panel Members:**

- Mr. Wassim Karkabi, Stanton Chase & HI. Dubai – UAE
- Alexandre Tremblay, Bachelor Program Manager ESSCA
- Julia Baber, officer for international corporate relations ESSCA



The panelists discussed the diversity of cultures and values from different parts of the World and covered specific Countries like Canada, France, Australia and Tunisia and how to close the cultural gap through breakthrough leadership skills

#### **Key Takeaways**

- When leading breakthrough changes through implementing new projects in new cultures or pursuing career development in other countries, it's not about leaving who we are, but being ourselves and bring people around the vision that we would like to achieve.
- Breakthrough definitions are different from one country to another and from one person to another
- Before breakthroughs, there should be breakdowns at the different organizational levels. We need to focus on breakdowns first in order to have the breakthroughs, this is when results will happen. Especially when it comes to

culture, as people have the tendency to not sacrifice their way of being within an organization to make the whole work together and adapt to others and consider their way of thinking. But when the breakdown happens, things start moving in the right direction, this is where we get motivated to come together and this is where we need Leaders. Those Leaders should focus on the warns that no one wants to bring up to the front, so we can have proper conversations, then breakthroughs can happen.

- Cultural centrism is a problem, people think a lot like townships. How to make them evolve out of that mindset and think differently and bring them to the point that we can do something together with different cultures, that's what Leaders should be driving
- Success doesn't have the same definition. One of the panelists measured it by the degree of happiness it brings. How happy we are with what we are doing every day? Always find the positive aspect and see the glass half full not half empty, we are born a human being and that's our power. Our own success perception might be different from our parents as sometimes they set a predefined vision for their children's future, then become surprised and to some extent deceived seeing them pursuing different dreams
- We can let people be themselves before judging who they are and use their assets in the greatest way we can do
- People have a tendency to create virtual walls and obstacles, like Government, Laws, and negative perceptions that will lead to imminent failure
- Cultural dimensions should be relatively compared to other cultures. Individualism, collectivism, masculinity, femininity, uncertainty, avoidance and long-term orientation, are different from one country to another. For example, the word strategy doesn't mean anything in China, as they look long-term timeline definition goes beyond for 50 to 150 years ahead, that's why such societies are more innovative, as they need to think creatively in the present and not wait for the unknown in 50 years.
- When moving to new cultures, individuals have a tendency to cocoon and live with the values

they came with. When back after a while to their countries, they feel alienated as they didn't keep up with those values evolution and changes.

- We need to take the cultural dimensions and understand what's the mission and the vision of an organization. There's the culture of the Company but each Department will have its own culture. To achieve the organization objectives, we need people to behave differently, while some are more innovative others are more compliant.

### Panel II: Transformational Leadership

Moderator: Manal Harrathi, Enterprise Strategic Director, Financial Technology Industry. TTU Secretary General.

#### Panel Members:

- Mounir Beltaifa, founder and President of Bridgers One, Paris
- Cedric Protière, CEO 3D Matchmovers – France-Tunisia
- Ines Nasri, Digital Marketing Specialist, Technology Optimist
- Helène Bourgon, Reporter in Syria/Lebanon, Cofounder 15-38, the first information network on the Mediterranean, Marseille
- Assia Ali, Digital & CRM Analytics, founder of yemmayummy Cuisine du monde, Marseille



The pace of change in the world and societies we live in has changed in a way that impacted the old definition of the "Long Term". Being transformational as individuals, organizations or societies to manage the international and local ecosystem variables is increasingly a required skill. Transformational leadership is one of the most

required skills to succeed transformation initiatives and restart the economic and social development engine like in the case of Tunisia.

### **Key Takeaways:**

**Influence Individuals:** Listening to that inner voice that wants to drive the desire to succeed will influence others and make them desire to succeed with you. Give the opportunity to evolve in a different way and see things differently from other angles, stimulate other to succeed, and develop their self-esteem, revalue and value people so they can stand again, and have confidence in themselves. Passion about the cause we are driving is very important to succeed in transformation initiatives. We need to focus on the strengths and work on the weaknesses, value the work and the added value each bring and put on the spot their talents, so they can shine.

**Organizations:** The largest organizational transformations for companies to improve their operations and business model are accompanied by technology upgrades. There are two types of models, those that will design an internal process to achieve the transformation and those that will adapt existing external processes and make employees follow them. It feels that the organization is adapting the tool, but in reality, they are adapting to the tool. Transformations succeed for a very simple reason, that's they generate enough productivity and benefits to redistribute to the employees, the customers, and the shareholders. If the transformation does not produce additional wealth and resources, it fails, and we know a lot of cases around the world.

**Startups:** One of the issues in Tunisia is that people who have skills are solicited elsewhere. Young people don't have the corporate culture, but they have solidarity, they love their work, there are energy and pleasure. On the other hand, no vision of the process, it's a feeling-based environment. It is necessary to introduce the process culture to change, structure, and improve. It's "One shot, one kill" a customer-centric approach where no back and forth, product releases are final and immediately used by the customer. How to announce the transition it's little by little, explain what a process is and how it is beneficial and work together on its improvement, so they can own it and they start adopting it to other employees. That's how trusting employees will pay up one day

**Digital:** When speaking about digital transformation, the perception is often about the hardware and the technology, whereas people are key and in the heart of the digital transformation. Resistance to change is the main obstacle, besides companies should have digital readiness, with a global vision. If only the Management sees the feasibility and value of the digital transformation without it being shared across all the organization, that will lead to its failure. Before talking about technology, we need to prepare the employees to be ready to move in the same direction as the Leadership vision

**Civil Society:** The first lever is the awareness, we need to emphasize that the future will change for the better if we do differently. If people don't understand the transformation and don't find their interests within, they won't adhere to. You have to make them think if they are part of the solution or the problem. As an individual, I need to ask the question, what are the transformations that I personally should tackle, so I inspire others? We have each a comfort zone that is difficult to leave, surrounded by the fear because of the uncertainty about the effectiveness of the change. Then we transition to the learning zone, where institutional support will be required. When we are not only learning but generating value and have created a model that works and sustainable, then starts the growth zone.

### **Recommendations from the working Groups**

Group A: Culture change Challenges and Opportunities & Breakthrough leadership skills to drive change

Group B: Innovative Solutions for Tunisia to Excel again & Vision and Outlook of Tunisia for a brighter future

- Breakthrough leadership varies between different cultures, the common denominator is the ability to stimulate transformation and create positive change. Culture divergence in the society starts at the educational level in Households, Schools, and Universities. Transformation stakeholders to impact change are: young children, young workforce, experienced workforce and Women
- Skills development is crucial to creating results, give more value to professional training and bring back the pedagogic module to the teacher's curriculum.
- Enhance the culture of respect, perseverance, work value and give moral support to young professionals to help them achieve their ambitions
- Provide scholarships to encourage Labor Market Degrees
- Capitalize on young Tunisian entrepreneurship and innovative spirit to transform Tunisia to a Lighthouse for MEA, through education upgrade, technology innovation, and enhancements of the ethics and respect values among youth
- Position Tunisia as Technical Hub in the Mediterranean and Africa
- Drive a culture of continuous education and recognition based on meritocracy