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**First Language: English**

*“aw...man”* was my first expression when I was assigned the task of leading my E-team. I have come across young students like me; who seem to know how to lead a group and more importantly, to lead them to victory; but what was I compared to them? I had a lot of doubts whether I could live up to my assigned position; what was I supposed to do in order to get my team started? How was I supposed to trust my team to do what they were supposed to do? What sort of behaviour was I to show them; was it to be nice at all counts? What does a leader need to do to get the ball rolling?

At the beginning, I introduced myself; keeping in mind that I had to be modest on all counts. Giving them my background gave me some confidence about potentially leading the team. My expectation was for them to reply right away even before considering time zone differences! I had no reply for a few days which got me concerned. I decided to bomb ideas on Basecamp with the belief that someone at some point would at least leave a comment! I would not mind how short a comment it might be; at least getting some feedback showed some progress in my book. I noticed that once an idea was thrown out, many started building on the idea given and before I knew it; we ended up with many different ideas with people collaborating to pick an idea that seemed both logical and realistic. Suddenly it hit me; having firm conviction at an early stage such as this, displayed my willingness to continue and in turn; my team members noticed this attitude and started to contribute.

I disliked the idea of confronting people via virtual communication. Resistance is always present when new ideas were given out. Many people threw out ideas but one resisted. At that point, I was feeling confused as to why should one person resist progress with such determination? I played it by my instinct and that was to take time to convince this person in believing the idea can help change people in a positive manner. We as human beings are always attracted to any idea that could help change people's lives for better. That is what makes us humans. After convincing the person, the next stage began. To be able to convince a person (who lives on the other side of the globe) to agree with an idea that was initially a source of conflict; was definitely rewarding! Hence I learnt that through overcoming resistance, my level of tolerance improved.

Delegate tasks to the person most suited for it. I put this concept into practice by distributing tasks among team members. This was the test of my position as a leader. Trust is not something that can be gained at first glance, it varies with culture. If my team members would not have completed the task, it would reflect on my leadership capability. At this stage of the competition, I was in constant battle with myself! Did I have what it takes to show faith in others? Few days after the tasks being distributed, I got the necessary information from each person in my group. I was taken aback by the concise analytical detail

displayed in the documents. The entire time, I was worried about getting the information that I forgot to have faith in them. I have now realized that a leader should show faith in his team members even under adverse circumstances. Did I show it? No, but in the future I know this is something I should keep in mind when dealing with a team.

I would like to give a special mention my three members: Adeleke Olalekan from Nigeria for showing constant support, and Yeison and Rafael from Colombia in regards to providing quality information in time.

I always gave more attention to aspiration rather than ambition. What I learnt from this competition cannot compute to a material prize. Now, the question I ask myself is: *'do I have what it takes to be a leader?'* well, throughout this competition; I experienced the idea of firm conviction i.e. backing yourself on the decision, I acted on my hunch, I was able to put an end to resistance within the group and last of all – moulded myself to have faith. Many times I have encountered this expression but only today I truly believe that *'the night is darkest before the dawn'*.