

Paddle. Catch a wave. Stand. Surf. (Part 2)

 By [Loyiso "The Victor" Twala](#)

12 Mar 2018

This is a continuation of feedback from Loyiso, an FCB creative sent to LeaderSurf as part of FCB Joburg's skills transfer and training programme.



Loyiso and the team he attended the LeaderSurf programme with.

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Once in the ocean, the surfer then has to time when the next best swell will come and be prepared for it because the surfer has to paddle ahead of the wave so that it meets them having already gained momentum. This really isn't locked off. It changes as time goes. All of this applied to a practical day-to-day example of a working environment speaks to not having an always-on approach to work and not operating on assumptions and auto-pilot, or you will just be wet all day and miss catching the wave.

This helped in cementing the thought that leadership is distinctly different to LeaderSurfing, where the former is about steering a large ship as a captain which can remove you from the action where the team you're leading is active and the latter embodies servant leadership where you have to understand the context and what needs to be done to reach your goals but must be deeply involved to realise the goal with constant review because context can shift on a minute-by-minute basis.

The business challenge had to do with applying learnings to real-life challenges that each of one us have in our work environments, where one participant shares their challenge and the rest of us share idea's on how it can be successfully resolved. We all found it quite impactful because each one of us walked away with practical steps that were in place to help us. Some of the things were confidential so I can't repeat it.

But the wealth of knowledge and insight shared by people ranging from age 28 to 57 years old from industries and disciplines far and wide, like advertising (me), human resources (Tom), IT recruitment (Sean), data systems (Nicole), FDA approval (Meredith) and property redevelopment (Varian) made for interesting perspectives and solutions.

Sunset reflections

Sunset reflections were a very therapeutic part of the day. We all had time to sit and really pay attention to the learnings we had on the day. Each one of us would take the time to share with others what we have realised that day, that would make us better people and in turn leaders. It left quite an impression on me because the moments were quite serene.

We did spend time away from the mentally challenging leadership sessions and the physical surfing activities, by visiting a local village where we led the Water Aid Project that the programme endorses under the banner LeaderServe.

With the guidance of a Nicaraguan veterinarian who helped us translate into Spanish, we distributed a water filtration system to counter the polluted groundwater that the villagers consume. We had to assist the families in learning how to assemble and maintain the system. We also gave away school bags, books, and stationery for the children. It was a very heartwarming and memorable experience.

I had personal goals that I wanted to achieve out of the programme. Some are yet to be realised because they are long-term, but gaining some global insights and having the tools to be a more well-rounded leader has definitely been my biggest gain.

Returning home

Returning home felt bittersweet. I missed home because in some ways Nicaragua reminded me of where I come from and the idea of going to see my wife and daughter felt really good. On the other hand, the thrill one gets when you feel this level of relaxation, matched with a vulnerability of exposing yourself to others and being even better for it was quite addictive.

Brian, the [LeaderSurf](#) founder, also had a feedback session as part of the program. One was led by him as a one-on-one for each participant. Brian would focus on key areas of importance that would benefit the individual. I found mine quite helpful, with a focus on how I operate with a group dynamic in influencing things by consistently sharing valuable input. The group feedback was very heart-stirring. Everyone shared their view on others' strength and areas of improvement.

This is what [LeaderSurf](#) in Nicaragua had to offer, and I am all the better for it. I leave you with these parting words from Brian, which are,

“You can't control the ocean, but you can control how you react to it.”

Salute to the Americans, Swiss, Venezuelan, Spanish, and Nicaraguans who acted as my close friends for a whole week, and hopefully beyond. Thank you, FCB Africa.

ABOUT LOYISO "THE VICTOR" TWALA

Loyiso 'The Victor' Twala is a Creative Director at FCB Joburg. He was identified by the agency as a young leader with an important role to play in the agency's future, and sent to LeaderSurf to help forge additional leadership skills.

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