

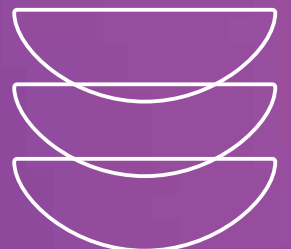
PERSONNA



# On The Edge of Greatness

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SOPHIA CHIN





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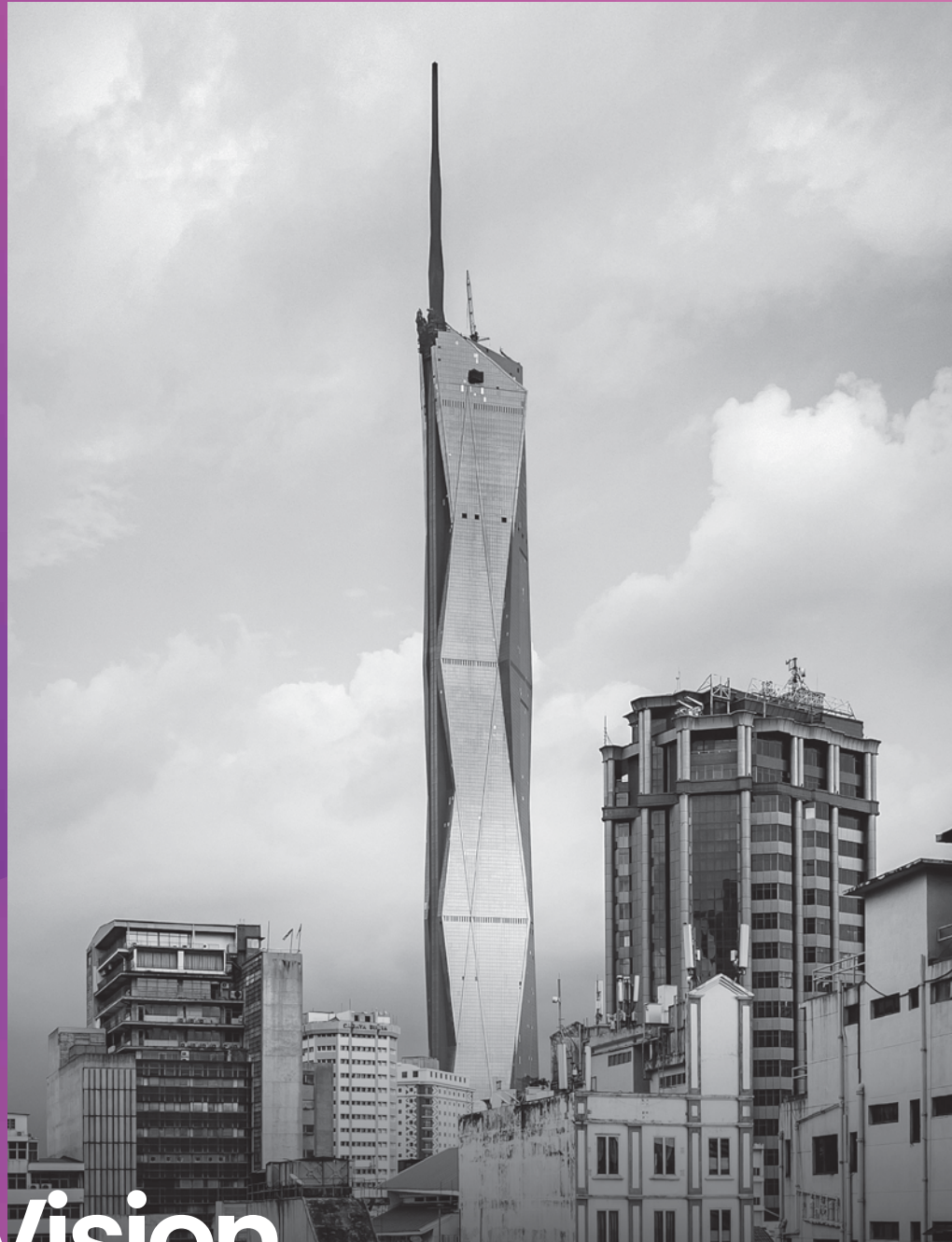


Vision  
Strategic Alignment  
Personal  
Organisation  
Quote  
Impact Card

**THE END**  
(A GOOD PLACE TO BEGIN)

I'm a leader.

Vision



## Touching Perfection

When people think about leadership development, they say, "Get an MBA." They spend months cramming case studies, best practices and management models into their heads so that they have the necessary tools & resources to excel in their next big role.

This is a great start, but it's not enough.

I believe that leadership development is a lifelong process of self-discovery through our own direct experience at work. There is no model answer. There is no one-size-fits-all. It's deeply personal.

Researchers have known for a long time that there is a sweet spot for performance: you're in the zone. When you're in the zone, performance flows easily, and new levels of performance are achieved. You are more likely to come up with new ideas and sudden flashes of insight. You feel greater enjoyment, energy and connection with others.

When you're not operating in the sweet spot for performance, it feels like you're squeezing and pushing your way to the top. You glorify the busyness of your work. You end up overwhelmed and burnt out.

When you don't make leadership personal, the leadership development programme remains academic or theoretical, and feels like an

assessment centre. Things like case studies, best practices and management models are developed based on learning by reflecting on the experiences of previous leaders and organisations. However, there are times when we face challenges that cannot be addressed just by reflecting on the experience of the past. Sometimes the experience of the past is not very useful - it's the very obstacle that stops us from coming up with a new way of responding to a situation.

Operating in the sweet spot for performance is our natural state of being. We are by nature a powerful force for positive change. Change requires us go to the edge of the world as we know it and reach out. When we reach out, we step into the unknown, and we meet the hesitation, unwillingness and raw fear that we encounter when we go beyond the confines of our conditioning. This is exactly where you are beginning to touch perfection. This is the edge of greatness.

The edge of greatness is not a comfortable zone. We forget that growth feels unpleasant, it's one struggle after another. That's why they call it growing pains. If it isn't uncomfortable, then you're not growing.

Everyone leads differently. Unlock the best way for you to lead. Pack your bags for the next level. There's a bigger game to be won here.





# On the Edge of Greatness

There are people out there who face fear, criticism and uncertainty every single day, all because they believe the world can be a better place. At PERSONNA, we work with leaders who are constantly looking to reach their next level of performance, whether as an individual, a team, or an organisation. They dream about operating in that fabled “sweet spot” for performance - a place where performance flows easily, and new levels of performance are achieved.

The sweet spot for performance is not something that you buy off the shelf. You already have it. Hitting that sweet spot for performance depends on the quality of your leadership presence. How open and present are you to the situation that is emerging moment by moment in front of you? We can deepen our presence by cultivating these three instruments of inner knowing:

## 1. Open Mind

This relates to our intellectual capacity which allows us to see the situation with fresh eyes and make sense of the raw data around us. Think big, act big, and you'll grow smaller. Instead, think big, act small, and you'll grow bigger.

## 2. Open Heart

This relates to our emotional intelligence and our innate capacity to connect with others as social beings. If you are not actively

empowering people, then you are disempowering them unintentionally. Instead, engage your emotional side. Make leadership personal.

## 3. Open Will

This relates to our capacity to make decisions and choose how we respond to a situation. What looks like a people problem is usually a situation problem. Instead, provide a safe environment where people can test their ideas without the fear of being punished.

This is not about squeezing and pushing your way to the top. That's too exhausting and you burn out sooner or later. Operating from the sweet spot for performance is your natural state of being. It's not about working harder; it's about letting go. People can work hard for many years but never free up enough to get into the sweet spot for performance.

Letting go is a defining moment. The way you view the world changes in an instant. You spontaneously let go of all the neurotic thinking and raging anger. You reconnect to your natural power source. It dawns on you: Oh, I'm only just beginning. It is exhilarating to be at the top of your game and feel like you've only now just learned how to lead. You realise that you have been playing small. You are not aspiring to the calibre of performance that you are capable of. I'm not done.

# Strategic Alignment







Personal

## Happily Ever After

I grew up with a stoic, no-frills lifestyle. Ballet was out of the question - "It makes you vain". Barbie dolls were frowned upon. Instead, I played with LEGO. And a lot of sports. Not quite made of sugar and spice, and everything nice. Well, if I can't be pretty, then at least I shall be smart and successful. Study hard. Get a good job. Work your way to the top.

At 15, I arrived in Singapore on the ASEAN scholarship. At 20, I won the JTC Corporation scholarship. At 23, I joined them as an Accountant and rose through the ranks on the "scholar track". I met a boy, got married and bought my first property. I was 25. I am set for life. On the surface, my life looked like a fairytale ending. This is always where the story ends: And she lived happily ever after. But why didn't it feel like happily ever after?

I grew up standing on the shoulders of giants. Under their wise guidance, I made huge progress very fast. I've arrived; but I wasn't happy. I had a niggling feeling that there was something else I'm meant to do.

I had no clue what that "something else" was, but I knew this perfect life that I had worked so hard for - to set me up for life - was plainly not it. The potential losses were clear, but the future was not. I was in a limbo.

I chose to bite the bullet. I broke up my marriage, becoming the first divorcee in my family's entire history. I refused to play the yes-man to the CFO, unlike everyone else, and stuck out like a bad smell. I left the scholar track.

I dived into the wild unknown. I changed career 4 times. I did the entrepreneurship thing. I fell and hurt myself many times, but I learnt to get back up and become better.

Today, I'm an entrepreneur, leadership expert and writer. I live in a testosterone-driven home with the love of my life and 3 young dashing boys, co-creating our dream beach villa at the Tip of Borneo with the local Rungus community. Being in business for myself feels like the most natural thing for me. I'm happiest when I'm using my imagination and expressing my creativity. It's not likely that I would be fulfilled with a safe, well-trodden career path.

When you're young, you have wonderful mentors whom you admire, and you want to emulate them. But at some point in life, you have to turn around and find your own path. How do you know when you've found "it"? You'll know; it's pretty powerful stuff. Heaven opens and the light shines through. And you're humbled because you've been called to a purpose greater than yourself: Oh, that's why I'm put on Earth. That's how you know; the feeling is magic.



# Co-Creating The Future

In 2010, I decided to flex my entrepreneurial muscle and left Aquent with another colleague to start our own executive search company.

I remember the first day of work. We're sitting in our new office: Starbucks. We didn't want to be defined by how the industry worked. People jump ship for an extra \$100. Companies hire and fire. And we're supposed to facilitate the transaction. It's good for business.

We didn't want to do that. So, how do we define our own way of working? How do we make things better?

I look at my open notebook and two blank pages stare back at me, evoking an existential tabula rasa. Gosh, I don't know...

So, what to do.... I fell back to the same day-to-day routine I had before. Except for one small difference. I started adopting a deeper, more personal approach with my customers. When taking the job brief, we talked about the impact the leader wants to make, what the organisation stands for. When interviewing candidates, we talked about their dreams and aspirations, and where they can make the biggest impact. I was always looking for that magic twinkle in their eyes. It's like discovering a seam of gold. You're touching on something that's deeply meaningful for them.

The conversations were more creative, fun and so much more empowering. "Why don't you offer this as a paid service?", one of our clients asked. That's interesting, how do we do that?

We started prototyping new services. We gave free workshops. We conducted leadership assessments that left clients with a "So what?" feeling. We learnt from the feedback and made the services better.

By listening to our customers, we realised that we were barely scratching the surface

of a much deeper problem. When organisations fail to achieve the results that they want, it's easy to blame people. But we forget that business is so dynamic and ever-changing. So many things can change - products, customers, market conditions, business size, capital structure. It's not that people are not working hard, they are. But there's a chink in the armour. The world is moving on and they are still hanging on to the past.

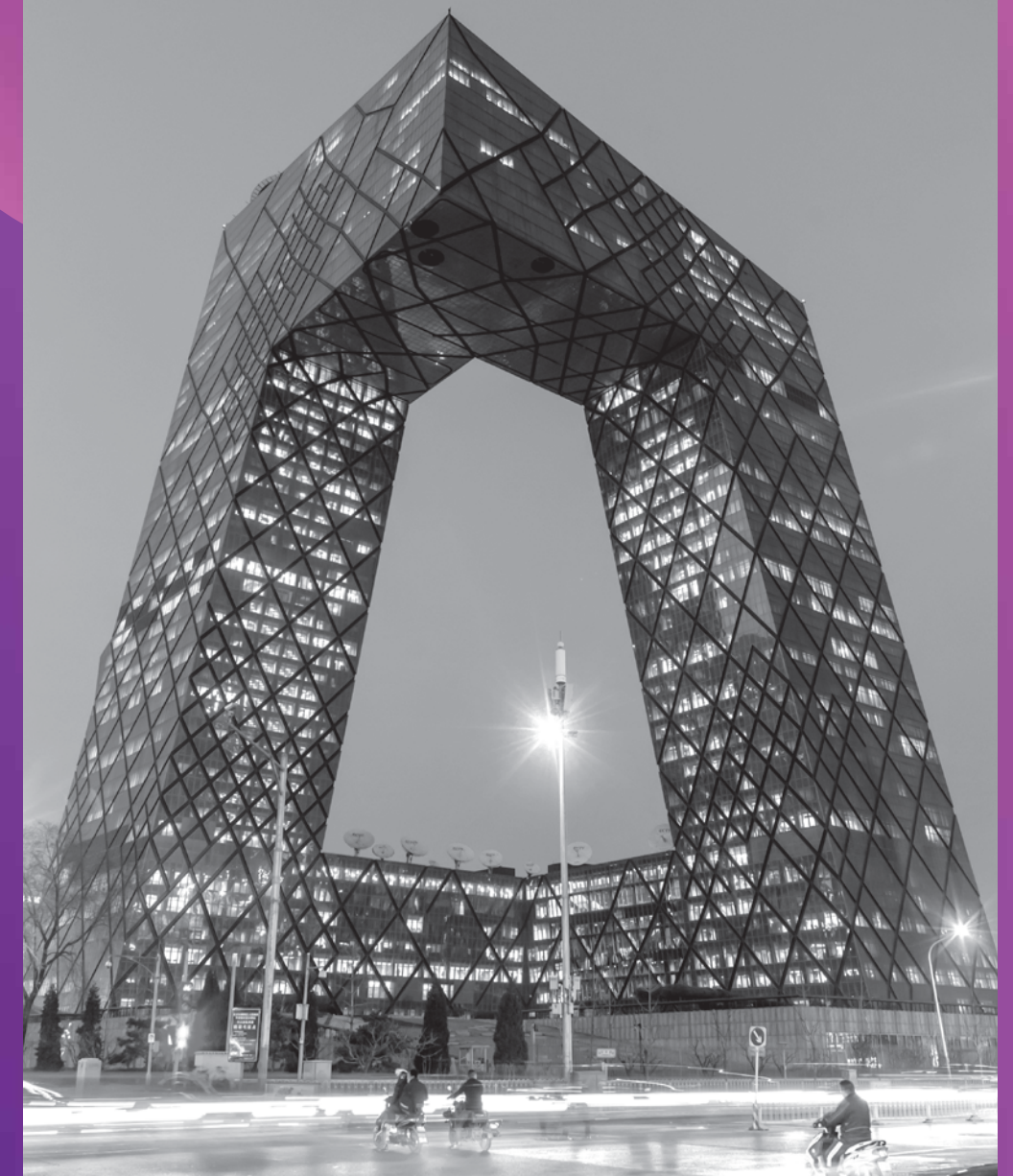
What looks like a people problem is usually a situation problem. But this problem also presents an opportunity that obviously requires people to change the way they work. It's exactly this disconnect, this conflict, that presents the emerging possibility. So, instead of hiring and firing, what if you invest in developing people to lead the change and reach new levels of performance?

Today, we are a leadership development company focused on the human side of transformation. We choose to see the world as an exciting constantly changing world, and there's nothing more thrilling than being part of a fast-moving team where everyone is working together to win the bigger game.

PERSONNA is a co-creation, shaped by employees, customers and partners. We went from recruitment to leadership development, but it was a long and arduous road: 12 prototypes across 3 years. There was blood. There were tears. Of joy and pain. There were a few WFIO (We're f\*cked, it's over!) moments. But it's also in those exact moments when we realise: This isn't when it's all over; this is when it all begins. That's when the biggest breakthroughs come. It's counter-intuitive, but it is what it is. Ask any successful leader or entrepreneur. You learn what's essential, not by searching for it, but by letting go of what's not. As a team, we were an incredible force of nature. We danced at the edge of greatness, and emerged in the light.



## Organisation



# Quote



Our deepest fear is not  
that we're inadequate.

Our deepest fear is  
that we're powerful  
beyond measure.

It is our light,  
not our darkness,  
that most frightens us.

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

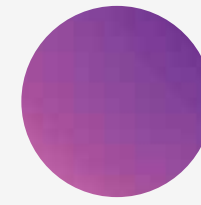






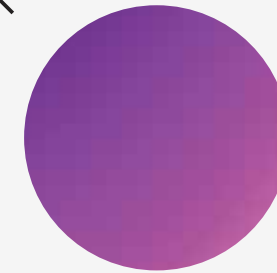
# Sparkle like you mean it

SOPHIA CHIN



## Passion

I am ambitious. But this ambition is not self-serving. Rather, I feel personally responsible for making the world a better place.



## Purpose

I'm here to build a performance support infrastructure, designed for human performance, to accelerate leadership for 11M corporate athletes across Asia.



## Power

I have a strong work ethic and natural ambition, especially meaningful goals. I have more than 20 years' experience in Leadership Development and Management Consulting.

## Peak

At my best, I'm a powerful force for positive change: driven, conscientious, and highly motivated to make the world a better place.







# **BEGINNING**

**(WHERE YOU MUST DECIDE TO START)**

**It's time.**

**To dance at the edge of greatness.**

**To dream boldly and  
imagine impossibilities.**

**To travel between two worlds.**

**The world that is possible  
and the world that is.**

**In a world that's changing,  
people are searching for meaning,  
to understand what is happening.**

**There has never been a greater  
need for leadership.**