

Managers should eat more soup: the crisis cure recipe

The year is 2021. Destine¹ owns a small business. Her restaurant is in Lapa, a location in Salvador, Brazil. In the country, we can typically notice both fancy buildings and slums close to each other. This specific address is close to both Vitoria, the richest neighborhood in the city, and Liberdade, known for its crowded second-hand street market. Overall, the proprietor possesses good territory: her cost is not elevated and she can have all types of clients at the same time. The model is definitely a dream for any manager.

However, Destine affirms that the COVID-19 crisis kills her vibe. The government has been in a cycle of interdiction and allowance for some commerce that will favor the transmission of the virus for a while. Food services are included in those decretes. She is instantly afraid to be closing her doors permanently. The holder actually used to think that her business was unbreakable, and that is more normal than it seems for a Latin generation that has not been through wars, natural disasters or pandemic in years to prove the opposite. The truth is that Destine should have saved money in the bank to invest in a good delivery system or any different idea that would adapt her marketing into any emergency that the society may face.

¹ All names are fictitious to fix this article in the requirements of the challenge.

Unfortunately, Destine is not alone on the boat. Many entrepreneurs in Brazil are bankrupt because they have been experiencing unstoppable thoughts like her and are now blind in front of an alternative for their problems due to lack of investment capital. Some actually do acquire money for the beginning, but they randomly apply their goods in the end. It is advisable to establish bright goals² in order to start a new activity idea or service, especially in crucial times. The ones who make this mistake skip some steps. They are reckless because of the moment and end up inaugurating any product that is not acceptable by their clients.

Advice about how to go through this world trauma may seem normal since some owners already follow the ideal trade manual. Glory's tale goes deeper than that. Glory is Destine's employee. Her story is an example: she challenges some recommendations that are dangerous for an entrepreneur, but the adventure ends well because of her inspiring vision. In addition, she is brave enough to take risks by processing an innovative project in her mind. Her *Drucker-wise* heart tells her *"The future requires decisions now. It imposes risk-now. It imposes action-now"*³. The say comes right when she is afraid to be fired and her ideas are not acceptable by her boss. Glory's hard work opposing to Destine's authority will be able to give tips to both the ones who are in this unstable market for

² Peter F. Drucker, "The Discipline of Innovation", Harvard Business Review, From the Magazine (August 2002), <https://hbr.org/2002/08/the-discipline-of-innovation>;

³ Peter F. Drucker. Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices. Harper Business, 1974.

years and the new youth generation who has nice business plans but faces lack of capital to start something on their own.

Glory is a manager in Destine's restaurant and a 21-year old mother. The paycheck from all the work is enough to cover the online studying, to take care of her big and shiny black-powered hair, to use make-ups that highlight her black traces and to save money for something of her own in the future. She is also able to raise her daughter, Star, who is physically similar to mommy and who loves letter soup. Well, during the COVID-19 crisis, Star has not been eating the things that she likes the most once her mother reduces the house bills in case she gets unemployed. That is an accurate threat. All that Glory hears from her boss is:

“I think I will have to close my business forever if the government opts for a new lockdown”.

Glory sees herself nervous all the time that her brown-hair short and thin boss runs around pronouncing those words. She cannot be unemployed. She has to sustain Destine. Then, she should thank her creative halo for all the calm. The now-employee decides to establish a good atmosphere back home in order to think straight about a solution. Glory steps by the supermarket and buys everything that both her daughter and she love, including Star's letter soup.

That is how Glory has the inspiration for the events that are able to change her life forever. While cooking, she imagines a world of possibilities for every cooked letter from the pot. By eating, the woman sees Star spelling some words herself on the plate border and starts to do it herself. Actually, the only word that the progenitor presents is "CRISIS".

"What is this?" the small innocent child asks while laughing, as if the term means a funny thing. Well, it may be for Glory.

"Managers should eat more soup," the mother replies to herself.

The creation for starters

Star is already used to Glory's alternative world of imagination, so she lets mama think. For each pasta letter that is in front of her, the black empowered girl finds a solution for the actual problem. Creation, Resource, Innovation, SocialProject, Intelligence, Sustainability. She opts to start with the first one. In her mind, the restaurant has to create a new service to attract new people to avoid bankrupting. By creation, she means *being the cause of the existence of something new*⁴. Glory is aware that everybody has this power in hands while working with something delightful for

⁴ Oxford Student's Dictionary, Oxford University Press 2007, page 172, meaning of creation.

one's self and the truth is that the manager finds herself in her zone with that thoughtful project.

Glory has the idea of giving birth to a business hub for the restaurant that will be focused on commerce and technological tools for the gastronomy field. During the lockdown, the place can actually cook some lunch boxes to go. At the same time, in her mind, if the workplace embraces a platform to attract people who have some vocation, mainly about canteen, those clients will exchange know-how and network while affording their products. When things reopens, the same ones will be happy to have the meal inside the restaurant area with the previous network. It has to do with Glory's goal in life: working with technology, innovation and human resources. She is happy to discuss with her boss about the new idea. However, after studying the plan some nights long and after setting the paperwork on the table, Destine replies:

"This is actually not good for us! You will actually create new strong concurrence here after empowering new businessmen of the field!"

"And no more arguments for that," Destine adds it all bossy. Glory was about to open her mouth to protest. "I know about my restaurant more than anyone here".

Resource - the 'less is more' ingredient

That is the moment in which Glory then sees it is high time to start her own thing. She wants to change the way restaurants work, which is normally seen as a place that is only focused on serving food. She aims to raise it as an example so people can read about the idea and have insight. If the concept is not related to canteens, at least the customer can absorb the message from one out of her five keywords from her soup. Nonetheless, Glory has a problem to face in order to accomplish her challenge. Resource. Coincidence or not, her second element holds the life-changing power.

Human Resource is seen by some theorists as the most important tool.⁵ By reading, Glory knows that her staff is also part of this universe. The personnel is not cheap, and she does not have enough capital for what she needs. However, she considers having partners to invest on her deal, and labor is also money.⁶ So what about looking after some friends for partnerships instead of employees? It will be cheaper and she only needs a programmer and a cook after all. The genius girl can start this intention in her non-structured house in the suburb and then, after acquiring clients, she considers to rent a medium-size space after the pandemic.

⁵ Jesal Shethna. Why Are Employees The Most Valuable Intangible Assets?. Educba. 2020. <https://www.educba.com/employee-most-valuable-intangible-assets/>

⁶ Alfredo Saad-Filho. Labor, Money and "Labour-Money": A Review of Marx's Critique of John Gray's Monetary Analysis. March 1993. King's College London.

Despite of tips as assigning roles from day one and finding someone with the same expectations⁷, having a friend as a partner is criticized in the marketing world due to its probable misunderstanding between friendship and business when you start it with someone you just like.⁸ Nonetheless, here comes Glory's geniality. She ponders forming the alliance in a way everybody actually learns something. If the idea does not hold water, at least everybody will obtain enough knowledge and willpower to start some independent project after all the mess. The valorization of the employees is also something that Drucker defends, and her idea of exchanging know-how and treating them as important tools for the métier has to do with the thought. The chances of the friendship to last post trauma is also high, since they will take it more as a hub than work in the first place. As long as it becomes serious, they get formalized and Glory can also quit her previous job. She decides to manage both at the same time, even though she sees it as both exhausting and quite unprofessional. Nonetheless, she has to keep on raising Star in a proper way. Besides, her failed attempt to talk with Destine about the project always calms her heart. She tried, but dreams talk higher!

⁷ Shelcy V. Joseph. Should You Start A Business With a Friend? These Experts Weight In. Forbes. June 11, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelcyvjoseph/2018/06/11/should-you-start-a-business-with-a-friend-these-experts-weigh-in/?sh=101a22131e8e>

⁸ Caroline Goldstein. Starting a Business With a Friend. Important Dos and Don'ts. October 22, 2020. Nerdwallet. <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/small-business/starting-a-business-with-a-friend>

Innovation - the grandma secret

Glory has never imagined that resources could come along with Innovation. Soon, she reviews Tidd and Bessant's contribution for the matter as the ability to establish relations, detect opportunities and take advantage of them.⁹ As soon as she presents the hub-innovative-restaurant idea to Beaver, her best programmer friend, he accepts it. He has always seen Glory as a magnificent student from school, who was able to take promising ideas out of nowhere. Beaver is not at the work of his dreams either, and he identifies the benefits from the upcoming experience exchange as a bright side other than the harsh risk from the intention. After all, being positive is also a good key for success.

Some people can imagine that finding a programmer is actually more difficult than having a cook working for you, since the latter is more in quantity. However, it is the opposite way. If the food does not taste properly, some other business owner can copy the same solution with a better service and all effort will be for nothing. In addition, she does not know any chef she can trust. That is when she has the brainstorm: she shares the idea with one of her friends who works for the Community Restaurant for some guidance. The contact provides Glory more than instruction.

⁹ Bessant, John; Tidd, Joe. *Managing Innovation: Integrated Technological Market and Organizational Change*, 5th edition., 2013, John Wiley & Sons Limited.

"I will send you the number of Alma, my colleague who is unemployed. But what you can also do is work with us, too. I can actually talk to the clients who come here to grab their lunch boxes and... You can also get some leftovers here to make food in your place. You can solve the raw material problem at the same time you have contact with people interested in starting from scratch."

Social Project - the strong sauce

Glory has already read about how social projects can actually aggregate in market issues. That is how she is awake about the project in Nubank, one of the biggest finance institutions in Brazil. Having such a project in your business scope can both make a company understand all kind of people by calling the minorities to your side and prevent from committing any big mistake¹⁰ that can be interpreted as racism or homophobia, for example. This is why the Brazilian bank solved to invest in a hub to employ more black and other small groups in Salvador after a scandal related to the theme. Glory knows that it is hard for other businesses to go social because most small and medium-size companies do not have money to raise an economic project that will most likely provide indirect return and demands labor time from the staff.

¹⁰ Blog Nubank. Paula Rothman. Our commitment with the racial diversity on Nubank. May, 21, 2021. <https://blog.nubank.com.br/carta-diversidade-racial-nubank/>

The new business owner is also aware that those ideas are more important now, when more people are in need because of the COVID-19 consequences related to unemployment. In this sense, ideas to support the others are more than welcome. The media wants to show the audience some of these examples. Being on TV will surely bring some more investors and clients for her. So, why not give a shot to social projects?

Intelligence - time to warm it up

There was Glory, comparing her business with one of the greatest in her country. However, she was not bragging because of that. The pioneer girl realizes that correlation is useful to establish the most successful, the medium and the worst scenario, so you can deal with your business in a better way.¹¹ She senses great intentions and intends to make it work after all the discipline. Glory must be strong to solve problems and have intelligence with her: She should carry an ability to solve all the issues and at the same time plan and thing in a complex way to figure out what to do.¹²

That is when Glory starts her business. Her original cost consists of the polystyrene lunch boxes, cooking gas and electricity. She can

¹¹ Joe Procopio. The Three Crisis Scenarios CEO Should Pan for Right Now. May 23, 2020. Marker. <https://marker.medium.com/how-to-plan-for-your-business-to-survive-the-coronavirus-fallout-efc2bb5c6f6d>

¹² Gottfredson, L.S. (1996, Winter). What do we know about intelligence? American Scholar, 15-30.

afford that with her savings that were first not enough for a business as a restaurant, but it becomes so after the support she receives. She is hosting it at her non-structured house, so rent free. The partnership with the *Restaurante Comunitário* legitimizes the plot. As long as she opens doors for the new clients, she posts it on social media and attracts medium-class people interested in embodying new business. What Glory has not expected is it to grow so soon. After two months, the business pays for itself and she formalizes everything and quits her job. Besides, one of the ideas that has to do with sustainability from two clients from her corporation shortens her costs with lunch boxes.

Sustainability - the *crème de la crème*

Sustainability is the last letter from Glory's soup. It has to do with focusing on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social.¹³ That may be so complex that Glory did not have an initial plan for this meaning. The perfect opportunity comes after she embraces her client's idea of purchasing lunch boxes from his new recycling company, which he founded thanks to the investment from another consumer. Then, she has the opportunity to appear on television, to talk about how her business

¹³ Michel Grant. Sustainability. Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/sustainability.asp>

works and to invite people to experience the new. At the same time, she entrusts her firm and saves the environment. That is actually the top notch dessert that is needed so she can be on.

In the end, two things happen. First, it represents such an economy for Glory, too. In the first month, she spends R\$300 reais with a thousand lunch boxes. In the second thirty days, her cost is reduced to R\$230 once the recycled product demands less money to be produced. Later, the viewpoint is so well transmitted that not only does it attract new clients but also her ex boss. Glory can say that she was actually expecting the consumers more than Destine for a visit.

"I should have listened to you. I couldn't be brave enough to continue my business."

"Please, come in", Glory invites Destine as she has never seen that woman before. "Check out our menu. I am sure there is something that you would like to eat".

"I cannot believe that you are actually welcoming me like that. You're an angel".

"Don't worry about it. The only thing I know is that '*the most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't said*' " ¹⁴ .

Keep the change!

Are you an old business manager and you see yourself lost with no capital? Take a day off, do something you like, come back as a renewed person and think about innovative, sustainable, social and last, but not least, low-cost alternatives. It reanimates your project if done right. Bear in mind that "*Defending yesterday is more risky than making tomorrow*"¹⁵. That is why you should actually expose yourself to danger a little to recover from the crises. Also, save money for the next thunderstorm. Being capitalized with some extra is always helpful.

Glory's story can actually lecture both old and new generations. However, excluding the career clue, one piece of good advice was indirectly given and should be said for the young generation: Forgive. For the ones who have the willpower to change the way things are seen by working, I can say that this characteristic is not present in everybody. Be patient, because being bossy and revengeful does not instruct anybody. In addition, we never know with whom we will be working afterward. A good entrepreneur is

¹⁴ Peter F. Drucker. interview, Bill Moyers *A World of Ideas* (1989)

¹⁵ Peter F. Drucker. *Management Expert, Innovations and Entrepreneurship*. HarperCollins Publishers 1985.

always well related. This may be the hardest one to follow due to all the uncertainty. This fact mixed with the hormones can lead to wrong decisions by anxiety. Understand that *“Every decision is risky: it is a commitment of present resources to an uncertain and unknown future”*¹⁶. You are blooming and you have the advantage of having more time to restart than the more adult ones. Face the survival in such sanitary crises as enriching. It definitely makes youth more cautious for the future.

Finally, for the one and the other genesis: If anything, do not forget to chill, to enjoy your life more and to have a good appetite for your soup! Perseverance is always the key to success, so always be positive while giving another chances for new projects!

¹⁶ Peter F. Drucker. *The Daily Drucker. 366 Days of Insight and Motivation for Getting the Right Things Done.* HarperBusiness, 2004.