

COLLOQUIUM

includes debate by practitioners and academicians on a contemporary topic

Leadership Development in Organizations in India: The Why and How of It (Part I)

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KEY WORDS

- Self Leadership Development
- Retail Leadership Management
- Enabling Culture Values
- Assessment Centres
- Satisfaction Indices
- Performance Support Learning
- Work-enabled Learning
- Talent Lifecycle
- Succession Planning
- Self Awareness
- 360 Degree Feedback
- Competence Development
- Leading Change
- Global Leader
- Innovation
- Transformative Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Neharika Vohra and Deepti Bhatnagar

About six to seven years ago, probably like many of our professional colleagues, we started noticing a systematic change in the pattern of demand for training. Almost every single request we received from training heads or learning and development heads of companies for training was for leadership development. Our management development programme on leadership and change management was receiving close to 100 applications from all sectors of the industry. These requests came from a variety of organizations, irrespective of the size, ownership pattern of the organization, or industry. Like everybody else, we got busy in designing and delivering programmes on developing leadership.

A few months ago, we stepped back, observed a pattern and wanted to decipher it. We noticed that while leadership development as a topic acquired prominence for executive development, either through customized or open-enrolment programmes, dialogue among academia and practitioners on leadership development was scant. It appeared that while everyone including companies, consultants, academic institutes, and trainers were busy working on their leadership agenda, there had not been an adequate organized effort to collate experiences, share processes, look at best practices, reflect on trends, and learn from each other. This Colloquium is an attempt to put together in one place such practices and, hopefully, begin a healthy dialogue among academicians, consultants, practi-

Multinationals, including those with an established presence in India as well as the new ones which have started their India operations recently, are endeavouring hard to find the right people and induct them in their culture.

* The contribution of these authors will appear in Part II of the Colloquium in the October-December, 2011 issue of Vikalpa. The names of all the authors appear in alphabetical order.

tioners, and users of such practices.

In our discussions and analysis of the reasons for the deluge of leadership development initiatives, we figured that part of the answer lies in the robust economic growth of India. Many Indian companies have been growing at a rate that was inconceivable even ten years ago. Companies that grew at 3 to 4 per cent for the first thirty years of their existence — somewhat in sync with the rate of growth of the Indian economy at that time — have grown at 150 per cent in the last few years. According to the July 2011 Economic Report released by the Ministry of Finance, the overall growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) was 8.5 per cent in 2010-11 and the index of industrial production was 8.8 per cent. The growth of core eight infrastructure industries was 5.2 per cent in June 2011 as compared to the growth of 4.4 per cent in June 2010.¹

At the organizational level, it is not uncommon to find companies expand phenomenally over the last five years – from having single-country operations to manufacturing in four countries and selling in 35 countries, increasing their workforce up to five times the number of people they had ever hired. Selling targets are set anywhere between 100 to 300 per cent as compared to the last year. Family businesses have had to choose to induct professional talent to be able to sustain and grow, and to learn to deal with countries they may have only read about in geography books. Many organizations in the public sector are being pushed to step out of their zone of comfort because of competition for their talent from private companies and intense competition for their products from China and other countries. Besides India's dominance in the field of IT and related services, of late, India has become an attractive location for multinationals to set up their Research and Development Centres. Multinationals, including those with an established presence in India as well as the new ones which have started their India operations recently, are endeavouring hard to find the right people and induct

them in their culture. Growth has been triggered by both, the growth of the Indian economy as also the changes taking place in different economies across the world.

It goes without saying that such unprecedented growth brings with it attendant opportunities and challenges. One such key challenge centres around managing people. If a company had grown organically at normal pace, in five to seven years, it would have been ready with its leadership pipeline, systems for training and development, and processes for managing expectations and careers. However, given the explosive discontinuous growth, that privilege has been denied to many organizations in India.

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To illustrate what we mean by explosive and discontinuous growth, we would cite a few examples. Subhiksha (now closed), added 500 retail stores across the country between February 2007 and December 2007. The fact that people had to be identified, selected, inducted, trained, and put in front of the customers so that the operations ran smoothly and the customers kept coming back to the store, suggests formidable expectations. Equally pressing were challenges like building a desired culture, norms for working and being in the organization, and developing employee commitment and identification with the organization. Similarly, when a twenty-five year old Ahmedabad-based company acquired the largest manufacturing facility in Mexico for the same product which

they have been manufacturing, there were challenges in running the operations in a distant country where people spoke a language that probably not even one of the Indian managers understood! Streamlining the operations in the Mexico plant so as to integrate the Gujarat facility with that of the Mexico was a redoubtable task. However, as if addressing such problems was not enough, there were additional issues to resolve. For example, the right people had to be sent to Mexico; the existing staff of the acquired plant had to be won over; maybe some had to be let go and new ones had to be hired, trust had to be built from scratch, relationships had to be built with the local government, businesses, and the local academic commu-

¹ <http://www.ibef.org/india/economy/economyoverview.aspx>

nity; and profits had to be made to win investor confidence. For all of this to happen smoothly, having well-trained and committed people in leadership positions was the first prerequisite.

Multinational companies which have established shops in India over the last one decade have had to deal with similar concerns. They are faced with challenges of adapting to the Indian context while keeping the norms of the host country or company intact. Choices have to be made with respect to having expatriate managers or hiring local talent. Employees have to be hired and inducted into the desired culture. There is stiff competition to attract managerial talent, and appropriately trained skilled and semi-skilled people have to be found.

Growth in sectors such as IT and financial services has been particularly impressive. In the last ten years, Indian companies such as Infosys and Wipro have grown 24 to 25 times in terms of the number of people they employ. For example, Infosys grew from 5,400 employees in 2000 to 1,31,000 employees in 2011. Many other organizations have equally impressive accounts. Such stories of exponential growth and related people management concerns are becoming fairly common in India. The growth of the economy has brought with it unique opportunities and also unprecedented challenges and consequently the need for leadership development. In addition to attracting, managing, and retaining talent and the existing and new people learning new ways of doing business is the incredible task of making people comfortable with change. It goes without saying that in the face of growth and opportunities, the established ways of working might need to undergo drastic changes. Organizations cannot be managed by mechanical approaches such as organizational restructuring and reengineering. New mindsets and leadership competencies are required to lead, manage, implement, and accept changes by all employees within the organization. Thus the demand for leadership development is also fuelled by the need to develop these new leadership competencies that help in dealing with change and bringing about change.

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Another facet of this change and one more reason for the spurt in demand for leadership development training, we conjecture, is because today, more than ever before, continuing with what worked in the past is just not sufficient. The old notions of positional authority and managing through command and control are fast losing their relevance. A recent study by Hay Group on best companies for leadership, observed, "Leadership in the twenty-first century is about leading at all levels; not restricting it to title. As organizations become flatter, the best leaders are learning they must check their egos at the door and become increasingly sensitive to diversity, generational and geographical issues."² The workplace of the 21st century is characterized by greater complexity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness. There is undoubtedly more diversity and different value systems of the Generation Y to be contended with. Employees seek challenge, meaningfulness, and purpose in the work they do. Working towards work-life balance is not something young employees are embarrassed about. The increase in complexity and higher accountability makes it impossible to hold on to the older ways of managing and leading. Employees have to be trained to lead in more effective ways.

It is our belief that to be able to survive the challenges posed by growth, the changing nature of work, and the aspirations of the people, the need for leadership development has intensified.

Defining Leadership Development

The two seemingly innocuous words, 'Leadership Development' are, of late, generating curiosity, intense debates, and multiple interpretations. There are many questions about leadership development: Is leadership development about the leader? If yes, then who is a leader? If no, then is it about developing leadership in the organization? What does leadership in the organization mean – capabilities or processes, or both? Also the attendant questions are – What are leadership capabilities? Who

² http://www.leadershipnow.com/leadingblog/2011/01/hay_groups_2010_best_companies.html

defines capabilities? What does it mean to develop them? Is it a consciously designed and carefully controlled process or is it something that happens on the sideline as individuals pursue their organizational dreams? Is it both? Neither? If it is structured, who structures it, and how should it be structured? If it is the process of development, what should be developed – knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviours? What role, if any, do the receivers of development inputs have? What indicators dependably indicate that indeed the desired development has been achieved? If leadership development is an emergent process, then what is needed for the emergent goal of development to evolve? If it is development of the leader or leadership, then who should be the driver and who should be the receiver? We do not claim to have answers to these questions. But we believe that the way a company or a group of managers choose to answer these questions significantly influences the route they will take to develop leadership within their organization.

However, just to give a flavour of the complexity of these questions, we would like to share some ideas on leader and leadership development. According to thinkers like Day (2000),³ there is a discernible difference between leader development and leadership development. *Leader development*

is the honing of attitude, behaviours, skills, and actions that a person might need to exhibit leader-like behaviours; it is a process of 'differentiation'. *Leadership development*, on the other hand, includes focus on processes such as social influence, team leadership, attention to factors such as organizational climate and social networks towards effectiveness in organizations; it is a process of 'integration'. Leader development involves teaching communication skills, sharing, and the ability to motivate individuals through positive social influences. Leadership development helps potential leaders with the how and when of leading. In their work, McCall, Lombardo and Morrison (1998)⁴ have defined leadership develop-

Leader development involves teaching communication skills, sharing, and the ability to motivate individuals through positive social influences. Leadership development helps potential leaders with the how and when of leading.

ment as a conscious effort to provide opportunities to 'learn and grow' to selected employees. It is expected that such efforts will prepare appropriately skilled people within the organization for future needs. The opportunities provided may be in the form of assignments, projects, classroom learning, coaching or mentoring. Effective leadership development design would strategically link the opportunity to the needs of the person and the organization at that time. Quinn (1996) maintains that leader and leadership development are not independent but they mutually influence each other.⁵ Another approach combines leader and leadership development in the objectives of leadership development in saying that leadership development programmes have three-fold objectives: (a) Situate the leadership development programme within the existing business logic and the desired culture; (b) Match the leadership development needs to the programme for development; and (c) help individuals develop and grow in their personal skills and attitudes.⁶

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Intent of this Colloquium

It is not our intention to engage in a debate on which is the best approach for leadership development. In our experience, we have found that most organizations are in fact trying in their own way to define leadership develop-

ment. Some have made major strides in this direction. Others are experimenting and evolving new approaches. However, the efforts, experiences, learning from experiences from various organizations, sectors, and industry are not all available in one place. Thus as a humble first step, this Colloquium brings together the current practices of leadership development from a few practitioners, consultants, and academicians in one forum. We believe that this will help us to begin a dialogue on leadership and processes nurturing it within organizations.

Summarizing the above discussion, one can conclude that organizations today face the dual challenge of finding and retaining people who are willing to lead in these interesting times, and also steadily developing their lead-

³ Day, D V (2000). "Leadership Development: A Review in Context," *Leadership Quarterly*, 11, 581-613.

⁴ McCall, M W, Jr.; Lombardo, M M and Morrison, A M (1988). *The Lessons of Experience: How Successful Executives Develop on the Job*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

⁵ Quinn, R E (2004). *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

⁶ www.hillconsultinggroup.org

ership pipeline. It is possible that after having invested heavily in training, several of those who were trained leave for other opportunities. The challenge for organizations is to train and enhance leadership skills among a large base of employees and also keep them engaged with the organization. This Colloquium presents some interesting perspectives and experiences.

In trying to be broadly representative, we wanted perspectives from organizations in the public sector, private sector, cooperatives, family business, and the multinational to be shared. Similarly, we wanted sectors such as manufacturing, software, finance and banking, retail, and service to be represented. We also wanted experiences from small, medium, and large organizations to be included. We hope that our final collection carries some flavour of each of these. In addition, the Colloquium carries a few contributions from consultants and academics active in the area of leadership development.

Our own experience of selecting contributors and reaching out to them was exigent and educative. We offer to our readers of this Colloquium a bouquet of varied approaches to leadership development in India. We hope that the variety and diversity will lend richness and depth

to the readers' engagement with the issue of leadership development. However, in trying to include several voices, the Colloquium became very long and the journal page limitations came in the way. It was simply not possible to carry the entire collection in one issue. We were asked to take a difficult call – have an unwieldy colloquium or split it into two parts. After much agony and deliberation, we opted for the latter. We decided to carry experiences from the manufacturing sector in the next issue (Aditya Birla Group, Ashok Minda Group, BEL, HUL, Lupin, Muruggapa Group, Siemens, and TCL). The next issue will also carry the perspectives on developing global leadership skills by Mark E Mendenhall. The present issue features experiences of the service sector (GCMMF, HDFC, Shoppers Stop), the IT sector (IBM, Infosys, IT Multinational, Microsoft) and views of two consulting organizations, the Kaipa Group and Vistas Consulting. We invite you to read these contributions to enjoy a productive and thought-provoking experience and wait for our next issue. Part II of the Colloquium would carry the leadership development journey into a different terrain of manufacturing and would also present insights drawn from the rich array of all the experiences included in the two issues. 

Leadership Experiments at GCMMF

B M Vyas

Historical Background of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF)

The Kheda district of Gujarat, well-known also as *Charutar Pradesh*, is a delta between two perennial rivers, Mahi and Sabarmati, consistently receiving good rains. Inhabitants of this region are widely believed to be among the most enterprising and hard working community in Gujarat.

Since milk was produced in abundance in this region, the British Government had given monopoly rights to Polson Dairy to collect milk from Kheda district and supply to Mumbai and to the British Army. For many years, Polson used this monopoly right to its great commercial advantage, and paid extremely low prices to milk producers, especially during the winter months when milk production would be much higher.

The milk producers were agitated due to this exploitation. When they went to complain to Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel about this patently unfair treatment, he advised them to organize themselves into a cooperative which would procure, process, and market milk and milk products. If successful, their cooperative could remove the middlemen so that the major part of the consumer's rupee could be passed on to the milk producer. Sardar Patel sent Morarji Desai to organize the milk cooperatives. Morarji Desai, in turn, entrusted the job to Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel to lead this cooperative movement. Tribhuvandas became the founder of the Amul Cooperative movement. He hired Verghese Kurien as the Manager.

The Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Ltd. (KCMPUL), Anand was registered in 1946. The Un-

ion established the brand name 'Amul' in 1955. By 1964, Amul had emerged not only as a well-known brand for milk and milk products like butter, but also as a successful development model. In 1965, the then Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri saw the potential and created the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and asked Dr. Verghese Kurien, to replicate the model on a nationwide level, as he had successfully done with Amul since 1949. With more Amul-like cooperatives coming up in Gujarat, in 1974, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) was founded to provide an overarching umbrella organization for the milk cooperatives. Dr Kurien successfully led the GCMMF and NDDB for many years. Sustained and focused efforts resulted in a high level of professionalism in the procurement, processing, and marketing of milk and milk products, modernization of the Indian dairy industry, and raising it to the global standards.

In later years, farmer leaders visiting Amul would often request Dr Verghese Kurien, the then Chairman of the GCMMF, to identify a professional of his calibre to lead their cooperatives in their areas. In response, Dr Kurien would say, "There are many Institutes to produce a Kurien, but there is none to produce a Tribhuvandas. You give me a Tribhuvandas and I will give you a Kurien." Tribhuvandas, a respected freedom fighter, was well known for his ability to organize farmers of that region and to keep them together.

The above quip by Kurien implied that though there were schools to produce managers, the real challenge was to develop quality leadership among the farmers. I was not clear about the meaning of leadership – Who is a leader and how can leadership be developed? Does developing leadership mean putting in position of authority a few trusted and competent individuals who would share their vision with people and guide them to move in that particular direction? Or, is it possible to develop a large base of leaders – people who can enable others to solve their problems themselves, especially in rural India? These thoughts would make me restless and I would wonder where and how to look for answers. I was unclear and my search for convincing answers continued.

Several years later, when I took over as the Managing

Director of the GCMMF to my good fortune, Dr Kurien was the founder Chairman of GCMMF. He allowed me a lot of space and freedom, so that I could dare to experiment towards developing some new models of leadership, and evolve some possible answers to my questions about the meaning and role of leadership. I share below a few such experiments with regard to self leadership development. I cannot claim to have obtained great success or final answers to my questions. In fact, there were some failures along with limited success. But I feel that nonetheless my learnings are worth sharing.

Self Leadership and Learning: A New Approach and Some Experiments

Our society has numerous problems and most people look up to the government or others to take the lead in finding a solution. Most people who provide such services or solutions expect to be compensated for their effort through adequate payment of dues. Rarely would anyone do anything meaningful out of self-motivation. Organizations try to solve their problems by creating positions of authority and placing their preferred employees in those positions that would have the responsibility to solve organizational problems. This often ends up building a bureaucratic structure with selected people in positions of power who may initially be very upbeat about the prospects, but their response and enthusiasm towards solving organizational problems often slows down with the passage of time.

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Developing Together an Agenda for Change and Skills to Achieve It

I wanted to evolve a new approach towards leadership in milk cooperatives. I put up a small team of young field workers (officers) to conduct a research in villages to identify a few important issues/problems that farmers wanted to solve. Such officers were trained in change management and also in the process of designing solutions to a problem.

Our design team researched and designed solutions, created training materials, and trained a battery of about 1,000 field workers who in turn carried out training across thousands of chairpersons, secretaries, and committee members of the village cooperatives and also a large

number of milk producers in 10,000 villages on select problems and their solutions. Farmers were encouraged to come forward and take charge of their problems themselves. The success of the first awareness programme with regard to 'What and Why We Need to Change' and later on the initiatives like 'Clean Milk Production', 'House-keeping' and 'Installation of Quality System ISO 9000' in village cooperative societies gave a lot of confidence to the design team and also to the participants.

Building Vision Mission Strategy at the Village Cooperative Level

It was then decided to conduct a Vision Mission Strategy (VMS) Workshop for all the village dairy cooperatives with the expectation that the milk producers themselves would arrive at a vision for their dairy cooperatives, the goals of the cooperatives and the strategy they would follow to achieve their goals. In a typical VMS workshop, the design teams presented factual data with analysis and described the current issues and challenges. For example, water is the main raw material for milk production. It is, therefore, very important to have an assured perennial availability of good quality water, have a system and facilities for proper storage and distribution of water, and develop practices to ensure that enough water is available to the cattle. The issues debated in the workshop included questions like: If water is the key to increased milk production, then what are the gaps and what action should be taken by the Management Committee and members on their own without waiting for external inducement to fill the gaps?

The goals and action plans were discussed, debated, and documented. Efforts were made to understand the current situation with regard to pressing issues such as cattle breed and its management, disease and its management, feed and fodder production, membership strength and its enhancement, human resource issues and procuring and use of technology such as installation of bulk milk coolers, automated milk testing machines, computers, etc. It was found that once the two-day VMS workshop was attended by 200 plus milk producers of the

village with the Management Committee members, their decisions and goals were aligned with the implementation schedule, which was then put up on the notice board of the office of the cooperative. The progress was regularly reviewed during Board meetings.

Such workshops were conducted in about 7,600 villages between 2006 and 2010 and are being continued till date. It is my belief that those villages where members took charge and implemented such vital goals are bound to throw up farmer leaders who have done something on their own for common good without the politicians' or Government's inducements.

Improving Quality at the Village Cooperative Level

Five years ago farmers were not even fully aware of how liberalization and globalization would impact them. They did not understand the importance of creating green cover through tree plantation for their villages. They did not realize the importance of cleanliness for their main business of milk collection, processing, and marketing. They did not know how to put Quality Systems in place in Village Society by having ISO 9000 or why they needed to install state-of-the-art automatic bulk milk coolers and automatic milk testing and weighing machines.

Awareness about these issues was raised among the villagers by involving them. The Chairpersons and Management Committee members of the village dairy cooperatives were encour-

aged to take the lead and make every member aware of the key concerns, and motivate them to participate on their own. Thus the Chairman and nine Managing Committee members provided leadership to the cooperative in this area. The same team would lead a discussion of the benefits of the 'Cold Chain Building' (installing bulk milk coolers) and convince members to go for it and run it efficiently. Again, they would discuss with members the meaning and advantages of getting ISO 9000 certification, audit, and rectification for their village milk cooperative, and convince them to bring clean milk, remove shoes as they entered the cooperative society building,

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and not smoke or eat *gutka* on the premises. Close involvement of farmers would make them feel proud if their cooperative received the ISO 9000 certification. The farmers felt embarrassed and ashamed in case the certification was suspended for deviations.

As a result of these efforts, all the village dairy cooperatives are today ISO 9000 certified. You may ask any Chairman or Management Committee member of a milk cooperative the meaning of ISO and its advantages, and you will get an informed and convincing reply. Even a casual conversation with an ordinary milk producer will impress you with the extent to which the members value their certification and the care they take to maintain the expected standards. In the last five years, thousands of bulk milk coolers and automatic milk collection systems have been installed all over Gujarat.

The increasing competition due to liberalization and impact of WTO led to the realization that doing business would be extremely competitive and that a focus on Total Quality Management (TQM) would be very important. And therefore, as a unique measure, several TQM initiatives were extended to our business partners whether it was the farmer producer in the village or a wholesale distributor in a metro town or its most sophisticated production unit. A number of TQM initiatives which ran successfully across the organization included *Kaizen*, Housekeeping, Small Group Activities, and *Hoshin Kanri* (policy development). It was believed that these initiatives would create a culture of transparency, openness, and leadership in the organization.

Going Green: Involving Farmers

Sometime in 2006, I started dabbling with the problem of the need for green cover in our villages. I believed that if India had to become Green, the forest departments cannot do so single-handedly — the farmers have to be involved. Running the 'Green India' campaign on television, and actually turning India 'Green' are two different propositions. I strongly feel that our greatest asset is our people resources at the grass-roots and they need to be engaged in the right direction, including for the green initiative.

It was felt that there was a need to sensitize farmers about global warming. Moreover, the tree cover is fundamental for good rains as rains enhance ground water level, which is a pre-requisite for Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Milk Producers of Gujarat have understood that tree plantation is essential for Dairy Development and that it is an important measure to check climate change and global warming.

I wanted awareness and involvement of farmers in greening Gujarat and hence asked the Design Team to devise a programme for inspiring and involving milk producers to plant one sapling each on August 15, 2006 between 9.30 and 10.30 am on an experimental basis. As a first step, we set up a target to plant at least 2 million trees.

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The Design Team consisting of 50 procurement officers from different milk unions and 1,000 trainers worked on the idea. The trainers conducted programmes in villages and encouraged farmers to take up the idea. All Chairpersons, Management Committee members, Secretaries of village cooperatives were involved at the planning and preparation stage. The design team developed an Activity plan and methodology for conducting tree plantation. They identified village level coordinators and arranged tree plantation awareness programmes. Roles

and responsibilities were assigned to each member. The District Forest Officers and the government authorities were contacted for obtaining the plan. The tree plantation awareness was cascaded to all villagers so that they could collect the required tree saplings. Logistics were worked out for delivery of saplings at least three days prior to the Independence Day. On the day of the tree plantation (15th August), after the milk collection and flag hoisting ceremony, saplings were distributed to members from milk cooperative societies. The members took oath to protect the saplings and accept the responsibility for successfully growing them into trees. The actual sapling plantation was carried out by members at their identified places — in their farm, home, common plot of villages, schools, etc. The Chairman and MDs of Milk Cooperatives also participated in the sapling plantation activity.

On August 16, 2006, the Design Team reported that 1.8 million saplings had been planted on the Independence Day! This achievement was celebrated and it was decided to speed up the process and inspire farmers to plant three saplings each. Accordingly, on August 15, 2007, during the flag hoisting ceremony held in the village dairy cooperative offices, saplings were distributed to all members in 13,000 villages. The farmers were advised to keep three pits ready in advance. Between 9.30 and 10.30 am, 5.5 million saplings were planted voluntarily.

The farmers were given a choice to select the type of saplings and their choices were procured by the village cooperatives. An evaluation showed a survival rate of more than 45 per cent over the next five months. This initiative was further intensified to plant saplings at the rate of five per farmer and include fruit trees like mango, chikoo, etc. In the years 2009 and 2010, about 8.8 million trees were planted each year. Between 2007 and 2009, out of a total of 15.6 million saplings planted, 8.4 million survived, indicating a survival rate of 53 per cent. The initiative has subsequently got rooted in the dairy cooperative model.

This initiative of farmers has been recognized nationally and internationally. In fact, GCMMF has won Srishti's G-Cube (G3 - Good Green Governance)

Award 2010 in the Service Category for the fourth consecutive time. The "Amul Green" movement has also been recognized and selected for the award of the best environment initiative in the "sustainability category" by the International Dairy Federation.

In all the above cases, young leaders in their early thirties came forward to drive the change management processes. They helped in convincing other members, carrying them along with their movement, and implementing significant initiatives by sacrificing their time and in the process learning the most valuable lessons of leadership through experimentation.

My belief, that the leadership that gets built through self-learning practices is not party- or politics-driven and therefore does not need government props, has been

strengthened. It will sustain over the years even without external support. Once a person has experienced the ability to move people towards a common agenda, he will surely recognize its power.

Conducting Self Leadership Programmes at the Village Level

I once attended a transformational spiritual leadership workshop conducted by a leading spiritual organization. However, I felt that just my attending it was of no use. All the Board members and others must undergo a similar programme so that they are able to transform the way we all lived and worked. I felt only such transformation could

sustain the success of GCMMF in the coming years. With the help of the leaders of the organization, I organized a short programme for the Board members. Subsequent meetings with the head of the organization led to the design of a 4-day programme on self-leadership. The purpose was to expose all of the village cooperative members to principles and practice of self management and meditation. The workshop was expected to infuse discipline, self-management, and leadership skills in the participants while teaching them the values of life, and urging them to not treat selling of milk as a pure commercial act. Many such programmes were conducted from 1997 to 2009.

Even today, I feel happy when I go to visit the milk cooperatives. I find a large number of members embodying the values discussed in the programme.

Outcome of the Experiments

When 10,000 Chairpersons, and their 90,000 Managing Committee members come forward and lead milk producers to implement these changes, handle the difficult process of managing change themselves, overcome the difficulties, experience the successful and not-so-successful results they encounter, it would give them a rare and invaluable experience in leadership and embolden them to take higher level of initiatives.

Hopefully, through these and other similar initiatives, the villagers would get a chance to 'manage change' directly. The people who work with involvement and ex-

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traordinary drive emerge and get accepted as milk producers' leaders.

Many of the present leaders (Cooperative Chairpersons and Management Committee members of village milk cooperatives) are very young and eager to learn and grow. Thanks to the various initiatives, there has not been a leadership vacuum as the old members moved on. I believe that some of the initiatives gave the opportunity to thousands of youth to experience and exercise leadership and thus helped to churn and bring the cream on the top.

By sharing these experiences, I wish to urge others to examine and look at alternative ways of developing leadership. I have tried some unique experiments and I feel that if they can be continuously refined and consistently implemented, we may throw up a different breed of leaders, not only in the villages but also in the country. I hope that at least a few of those village cooperative members who have experienced these initiatives or have participated through self-initiative and drive will emerge as good leaders sooner or later. I am fully convinced that we have to pursue the path of grooming young leaders relentlessly. 📌

Leadership Development at HDFC Limited

Prabhat Rao and S K Vasant

HDFC is India's first retail housing finance company. Promoted in 1977, it is currently one of the largest originators of housing loans in India. The primary objective of HDFC is to enhance residential housing stock in India through the provision of housing finance on a systematic and professional basis and to promote home ownership throughout the country. It has contributed to increasing the flow of resources to the housing sector through the integration of the housing finance sector with the overall domestic financial markets. Since its inception in 1977, HDFC has financed over 3.8 million housing units with cumulative loan approvals amounting to Rs. 3,732.46 billion (US\$ 83.46 billion) and cumulative loan disbursements amounting to Rs. 3,025.33 billion (US\$ 67.65 billion). It also offers technical assistance and consultancy services in mortgage finance to new and existing mortgage finance institutions in several countries in Asia, Africa, and East Europe. It has 203,966 shareholders, 74 per cent of them being foreign investors.

HDFC has a wide network of 289 offices catering to over 2,400 towns and cities spread across India. To cater to the

non-resident Indians, it has offices in London, Dubai, and Singapore and service associates in Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, and Saudi Arabia – Al Khobar, Jeddah and Riyadh.

Till mid 90s, the housing market comprised of very few players along with HDFC. Since then, the competitive landscape has significantly changed, redefining the nature of business. HDFC accelerated the learning process to counter the competition and reviewed the value proposition it offered to its customers. Thus it vigorously focused on the need to invest in leadership at all levels in the organization.

Organization Structure

HDFC has an organization structure that has a broad span of control at each level. The Company is managed by a Board of Directors comprising eminent personalities who are specialists in various fields. A team of Regional Business Heads based at different Regional Offices across the country are supported by Business Heads and Branch Managers who are responsible for managing business at their respective locations.

HDFC has committed to learning by continuous improvement. It considers people as its most valuable assets and therefore believes in their continuous learning and development. The Company maintains that the rate of learning has to be faster than the rate of change in the environment.

Employee Profile

HDFC has a strength of more than 1,700 employees, which includes over 800 professionals from the fields of finance, law, accountancy, management, marketing, and engineering. Over 500 staff members form part of the middle and senior management executives. The overall ratio of males to females in HDFC is 80:20. Around 15 per cent of the Senior Management team comprises women, all of whom are professionally qualified.

Learning in HDFC

Philosophy

HT Parekh, the Founder Chairmain of HDFC said, *"HDFC's finest investment is in its human resources. It draws its personnel from many disciplines. They are building blocks on which the company's performance and productivity are based."*

HDFC has committed to learning by continuous improvement. It considers people as its most valuable assets and therefore believes in their continuous learning and development. The Company maintains that the rate of learning has to be faster than the rate of change in the environment. It recognizes the need for accelerating the learning process within the organization to enhance competitiveness and thereby contribute to stakeholder value. On-going training, both in functional and behavioural areas, ensures that the customer experience is enhanced continuously.

HDFC as an organization has been built on the basis of fairness, kindness, efficiency, and effectiveness. A genuineness of purpose with transparency in execution has been a major building block, providing the foundation for learning organization. At HDFC, the emphasis is on *"learning by doing"* and the objective is not to make the same mistake twice over.

The Company focuses on employee's career development to ensure that their aspirations are aligned with the organizational goals. It has a highly motivated team of professionals and has one of the lowest employee attrition rates in the industry. The consistent high growth rate over the past 33 years has provided challenging career oppor-

tunities for young professionals, many of whom have grown to become functional heads, regional managers, branch managers, and service centre heads. The incumbent Vice-Chairman and CEO joined the organization in 1981 as an entry level manager.

Also, HDFC has been a single product company over the last 33 years. However, we have looked at creating verticals such as *"loan against property"* and *"rural housing"* which have created ample opportunities for leadership roles as well.

HDFC's strategy in line with its goals of *"growing through diversification and by leveraging off its existing client*

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base" is to create new companies like the HDFC Bank, HDFC Life, HDFC Asset Management Company, HDFC Ergo, and other such companies. The dual advantage of this strategy has been that it has been able to offer its existing clients financial products under the HDFC brand and that some senior managers have moved to these group companies into critical leadership positions.

Learning Needs and Communication Process

The primary objective of Learning and Development function is to ensure that staff members are not only adequately

trained in functional and behavioural skills to sustain high standards of service, but also evolve as learning and growing human beings. Learning and development are perceived as an investment. Job-specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes are identified during the performance appraisal process, through discussions with immediate superiors/managers, based on the changing business needs discussed at strategy meets, etc.

HDFC's communication process is highly penetrative and effective and is able to maintain transparency and accountability. The periodic business strategy meetings and review meetings are good examples of how communication takes place. These meetings are conducted at all levels and not limited only to the top management.

Meetings are held periodically at branch and regional levels. In the branch level meetings, the branch manager along with the employees chalk out their strategic plan

for the branch, in line with the overall corporate plan. Issues including customer service, product development, operational procedure, system requirements, and profitability and training needs are discussed in detail. Generally, after such review meets, the areas in which training is required in the context of business requirements are communicated to the Learning and Development function.

Every Friday, the Top and Senior management have a conference call, where the issues of the week such as the business achieved, major issues faced, strategies of the competition, the costs of borrowing, and in which direction the action should focus, are discussed. This call is chaired by the Vice Chairman or the Managing Director. It has proved to be a very useful activity for sharing and escalation of business related issues in a transparent and participative manner.

HDFC has a transparent performance appraisal process. Training needs are identified after assessing performance at work and discussion with appraisees. Performance is evaluated on the basis of key result areas and specific attributes. The Learning and Development Needs Assessment form is completed during the appraisal process. The appraiser and the appraisee discuss the key areas where the appraisee needs to develop his/her knowledge, skills, and attitude. Learning and development needs are also identified on the basis of internal audit reports. HDFC has also recently initiated a competency mapping exercise for Branch Managers, the primary objective being identification of learning needs. Based on the information available, the HRD department develops an action plan for programmes, i.e., on-the-job training, job rotation or training through various programmes – internal, external or international.

Nature of Training Offered

At HDFC, we have developed a multi-pronged training strategy for developing leaders. Starting from induction, on-the-job training to international assignments and programmes, all are part of our training canvas. We neither

restrict ourselves to methodology or periodicity, nor to being thought leaders about leadership development. We believe in growing internal trainers, and stress on actual behaviour, on-the-job training, and classroom delivery as bonafide means of training.

On-the-job training: As indicated earlier, HDFC adopts the philosophy of 'Learning by doing'. An employee learns more by actually performing. On-the-job training helps the employee to get access to their work and in relating to their tasks and role more efficiently.

Job Rotation: Employees should be familiar with processes in other functions. This is achieved by moving people through various functions to appreciate, learn, and understand specific processes. This enables employees

to understand the various customer touch points in depth and the value creation process.

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Training Programmes

HDFC's aim is to create an enabling environment in which employees take the responsibility for making significant shifts in the value creation process for the customers and contribute to the goals of the company. Some of the training programmes offered to the employees, based on identified needs are:

HDFC School: The School provides a complete insight to the frontline staff into the operations of HDFC, its products and processes on the assets and liability side of the balance sheet. The programme is facilitated by senior line

managers.

Enjoying Challenges Together: It is a teamwork-based programme that helps to clarify roles and responsibilities of each department by giving and receiving individual and departmental feedback. It helps in resolving intra/inter-department concerns. Participants learn ways to work joyfully together, resulting in superior results.

Executive Development Programme: The main purpose of this programme is role clarification — to clearly define supervisory role in the overall context of the organization and initiate specific actions to improve effectiveness.

Communication skills and ability to work in teams are important ingredients of the programme. Participants learn to manage time and energy better in relation to the multiplicity of expectations from their role.

Enhancing Managerial Skills Programme: This programme is designed to enhance awareness, inspire, and build on both behavioural competencies and managerial skills. The objective is to enable participants to cope up with the current challenges and achieve defined outcomes. Its contents include problem solving, decision-making, leadership skills, self-exploration, time management, and role clarity.

Leadership Programmes

Leadership effectiveness plays a significant role in the success of the team and consequently organizational results. It is extremely important therefore for key individuals in the organization to understand how they can enhance their skills and adapt their styles in response to the needs of the organization. Leadership skills facilitate learning in the organization. Leadership programmes include inputs on motivation, coaching, and counseling. They are conducted on a regular basis for Branch Heads as well as functional heads.

During 2011, HDFC initiated a Leadership Development Programme with a reputable management institute for a select group of middle and senior managers, specifically identified for future leadership positions. This exercise was under the direct guidance of the Managing Director.

Empowered Trainer

Empowered trainers are the driving force for organizational learning and change at all levels. While relevant information required for training is available in books, exercises, slides, films, etc., it is the skilled trainers who translate it all into powerful programmes for the organization.

At HDFC, senior executives in the line function who have necessary knowledge, traits, and inclination and drive to facilitate have been trained to be trainers in their respective functional areas. These facilitators are not only capable of scientifically identifying training needs but also

design, develop, and deliver training programmes in their branch/region. The HR department centrally coordinates their effort and gives necessary support.

Mentoring

In addition to training at HDFC, there is also a structured mentoring programme as another way to deepen leadership development across the organization. The mentoring programme assists new employees to integrate quickly into the organization; it serves as a vehicle to inculcate values of HDFC such as result orientation and team working among new employees; helps outline and draw up a competency development plan; and find aspirations and work out solutions in real time to spot and retain talent.

Mentors are carefully selected on the basis of their functional exposure and experience and trained on the mentoring process. Each employee is assigned a mentor and each newcomer is told in the appointment letter itself who is going to be his/her mentor. Mentors and mentees submit meeting reports to HRD at periodic intervals after each meeting.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

The art of managing and leading has always been dynamic. Today it is changing more quickly and dramatically than ever before. The soft skills such as the ability to understand oneself, understand people's thinking and emotions, to inspire them by 'selling' them your vision and getting their 'buy in' to this vision, are critical in every role. The NLP programmes are custom-designed after identifying specific needs for credit risk management, loan origination, and other functional staff.

Enhancing Personal Effectiveness

This workshop is designed to empower participants to be fully in control of their lives and optimize their unlimited potential thereby enabling them to achieve breakthroughs at work as well as in personal life. "Enhancing Personal Effectiveness" provides an opportunity and a platform to the participants to explore the strengths and weaknesses of one's own self and become capable of developing one's potential to the fullest, while handling weaknesses effectively.

Every company has a set of written values and goals – but what sets HDFC apart is that it has institutionalized a set of practices so as to live by its values and principles.

Time and Stress Management

This programme is conducted in order to help participants to manage their time and priorities better and handle stress in positive ways to achieve results. Employees learn to keep track of their time expenditure and accordingly identify and eliminate time wasters. They learn the benefits of delegation, thereby releasing more time for creative work.

External Training Programme

Based on the identified needs, employees are nominated for external programmes conducted by various institutions and professional bodies, management institutes, etc.

International Programmes and Exposure

Selected staff members are nominated for international training programmes conducted by institutions of repute abroad. Some of them have also visited various mortgage and retail lending institutions in USA and Europe to study various products, processes, and work practices followed in these institutions – especially those related to use of technology.

These study assignments have been instrumental in the development of new products as well as benchmarking some processes in HDFC. For some of the consulting assignments taken up by HDFC for various corporate and countries, middle management staff is usually inducted into the team in order to nurture them and develop in them an international/global perspective.

Overall Implementation Plan for HDFC Training Programmes

After the learning needs of the employees are identified, learning initiatives are planned to fulfill the requirements and accordingly participants attend different training programmes. Pre-programme questionnaire is sent to the nominees. Questions are framed such that it provides a clear picture of the role of nominee and specific skills wherein s/he needs development. After receiving the

questionnaire from the nominees, it is compiled and analysed. Accordingly, the programme is designed/fine-tuned and data is shared with the facilitators of the programme. Participants in the programme are usually from various branches and departments. The programmes are designed for maximum interaction amongst participants through discussions, role-plays, case studies and many more activities, which leads to better bonding amongst the participants. At the end of the programme, participants fill in the programme feedback questionnaire, where they rate the programme as well as the facilitators, which is compiled and shared with the facilitators and the senior/top management.

The people who work at HDFC do not view themselves as employees or see the company as an employer. Senior management has instilled among employees a feeling that “the company belongs to us as much as we belong to the company.” This gives them a sense of being part of an extended family.

Training Management System

The training database is utilized for the purpose of updating needs identified through the performance appraisal process and other process mentioned earlier. Participation of employees is updated on a regular basis and data is available through various report options. All staff members have access to their respective training related information. Functional heads, branch managers, and regional managers can access training related data for their respective staff.

Infrastructure for Training

HDFC has a professional learning centre, Centre of Housing Finance (CHF), at Lonavla. It was set up in 1990 to provide functional and soft skill training to its executives from all locations in the country. CHF also conducts international training programmes on housing finance management and organizational development for housing finance companies in Asia, Africa, and East Europe.

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HDFC Culture

At HDFC, leadership development is not limited to assessment and training. We believe that leaders can be developed and kept in an organization only by having a consistent organizational culture. Each employee must embody the culture. The organization believes that it is this corporate culture or “the HDFC way of doing things” which forms the foundation for long-term success.

Every company has a set of written values and goals – but what sets HDFC apart is that it has institutionalized a set of practices so as to live by its values and principles. At the heart of these practices is the organization’s firm commitment to building long-term, mutually supportive relationships with all its key constituencies: its employees, investors, depositors, borrowers, and regulators.

HDFC has built a principle-centred organization – based on fairness, kindness, efficiency, and effectiveness. It has built trust between people, strengthened communication, and adopted a participative style of management. The company works with an open-door policy. Everyone knows each other and people can walk into the office of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and CEO, Managing Director or Executive Director to raise their concerns and have them addressed.

HDFC values strong teamwork, interpersonal relationship, and supportive leadership. Senior managers want a lot of inputs with the initiatives of planning and decision making to come from all employees, irrespective of their hierarchy. Employees are expected to exercise and accept leadership, thereby learning to lead and follow

simultaneously. Senior management view leadership as a creative process and depend on fluid communication – up, down, and across the organization, thus ensuring free sharing of information.

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HDFC’s robust growth story and impressive business results, coupled with numerous prestigious awards conferred over the years for, *inter alia*, investor relations, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility, ethical management, etc., seem to endorse the

fact that its leadership development efforts are yielding good dividends. HDFC has proved that an organization based on strong business ethics, an impeccable enlightened leadership, can not only survive, but also continue to remain a market leader even in an aggressively competitive market. Perhaps, all the above have resulted in the creation of a very strong HDFC brand. 

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Retail Leadership Development: The Theory and Practice at Shoppers Stop

Govind Shrikhande

Govinda Pyramid

Everyone in India knows about the Govinda Pyramid, which celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna, through a ritual of ‘Dahi Handi’ (*pot full of curd*). The entire atmosphere, created by the rains, a ‘Handi’ suspended high in the air, a joyous ‘Toli’ (Group) of *Govindas*, stretching themselves to the ultimate to reach the pot, and the boisterous crowd cheering them, is a ‘Must See Experience’.

Apart from the formation of an eye-catching symmetrical structure, there is a hidden management principle in this

wholesome fun activity, which is not quite apparent.

The Govinda Pyramid is a combination of several levels of varying competencies that tries to attain a goal, in this case, the ‘Dahi Handi,’ through a coordinated team effort.

The bottom level brings in experience, strength, maturity, and planning to the Pyramid. The middle level adds flair to push the boundaries, provides tough support in execution and also gives flexibility. The top level triggers agility, speed, nimbleness and a youthful urge to beat the goals.

If all the three levels had the same qualities and competencies, then the 'Toli' would never achieve the task of breaking the 'handi'. It is the combined effect of team work and an appropriate mix of competencies that help the 'Toli' to plan, execute, and break the Handi.

What is the significance of this Pyramid to Retail Leadership Management?

Indian Organized Retail

India has been a country of traders from time immemorial. It is a land of 'dukandaars' (shopkeepers) with more than 15 million retailers spread across the country. Organized retail, however, has been slow to start – with ration shops, textile chains, and footwear chains, ruling the roost, from 1960's to 1990. 1991 saw the birth of Shoppers Stop, the first Department Store Chain of India. This was followed by many other chains and formats, post-economic liberalization of 1995. A number of chains including apparel and electronics retailers came up in the new open economy. But it was only after 2001 that the pace of modernization of the Indian retail gathered momentum.

A lot of new formats emerged — from Hypermarkets and Home Stores, to Mobile Stores, F&B Outlets, and Multiplexes. Awareness and aspirations rose along with the rising consumer income. Malls became the new recreation centres and popular hang-outs for family and friends. Consumers also became more demanding, fashionable, and knowledgeable. Double income families had the additional means and aspirations to make their dreams come true.

As the industry exploded at a break-neck pace, the biggest challenge was talent management. The other big challenges included:

- High cost of rents
- High competition from both organized and unorganized sectors
- Low margins

- Poor infrastructure.

Multi-tax structure cutting across the states and the Centre further added to the complexity. Retail business is dependent on a growing economy. Whenever the economy falters, retail sales are the first to take a dip as consumers prefer to save or postpone their expenses, and when retail sales go down, a lot of retail companies go down under, as we saw during the last few years.

The key foundation of retail success has definitely been talent management. Most management effort is dedicated to attracting, retaining, and growing talent. This strategy has worked wonders for Shoppers Stop as can

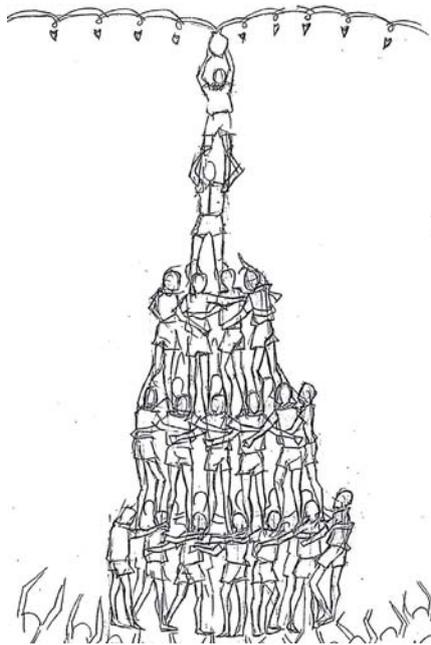
be seen from its history of growth. Launched in 1991, as a men's-wear store, covering just 4,500 sq ft space, it has not only expanded across India, to 43 stores and 3.5 million sq ft in the department store format but has also started other formats like Homestop, Crossword, Hypercity, Airport Stores, etc., over the last twenty years,

The network of Shoppers Stop outlets covers 19 cities across India. While the department store is positioned as a house of brands for fashionable families — stocking apparel and non-apparel fashion brands – both international and national, Hypercity stocks food, grocery and general merchandise catering to the maximum wallet share of the customers. HomeStop and Crossword have a niche segment covering home and

books, music, toys, and stationery. All the formats have won several national and international awards. As of date, there are more than 4,500 associates working from Siliguri to Chennai.

Retail Leadership Management at Shoppers Stop

When organized retail started in India – very few people saw it as an attractive employment opportunity. While most of them were worried about losing their Sundays and holidays – the days of high retail sales – some felt that it was a tiring job – standing throughout the day in a store, waiting for their 'God' – 'The Customer' to arrive, and a few gave silly reasons like – "who will marry us!!"



Sketch by Sharon Pimento, Designer and a Category Visual Merchandiser at Shoppers Stop

So, we had a tough time, recruiting people at all levels.

For an outsider, retail is a simple job of selling merchandise at a profit. In reality, it is much more complex, involving both science and art of retailing. The retail Industry requires three kinds of roles/skill sets:

- a) The Buying, Merchandising and Design (B&M) Team works to create the merchandise offering, considering the target customers. This team comprises Fashion graduates, MBAs, designers, etc., who work on fashion insights, sourcing skills, and customer understanding and is the backbone of the organization. The merchandise assortment is completed by working along with designers, manufacturers, and brands, and ensuring the right size and price along with timely availability. Creating an assortment requires experience, a proper understanding of fashion and consumers' needs, and the ability to innovate and identify winning products.
- b) The Operations Team works on achieving sales by actually servicing the customers and delivering the sales targets. This team is the 'Army and Face' of the retail organization. They are young, energetic, and live-wire go-getters. This group mainly consists of undergraduates and graduates, along with MBAs and accountants.
- c) A Third team, which is an amalgamation of various teams, makes the whole cycle of attracting, retaining, and transacting with the customer seamless. This group consists of marketing wizards, CAs, architects, IT experts, lawyers, engineers, accountants, HR experts, and MBAs. They design and deliver great stores, recruit and retain the right talent, manage the supply chain and information chain, manage costs and profits, draw agreements, and sign retail spaces.

This also brings us to the parallel between the Govinda Pyramid and Retail Structures!

The B&M team is the bottom level of the pyramid, which provides experience, knowledge, and strength to produce

an attractive assortment for the customer. Their planning creates the platform for winning. The middle levels which are a combination of all enabling teams, are the backbone of the pyramid and hold the structure together. The top level is the operations and front-end sales team. This is the army that serves the customer with a smile and delivers sales. This team is nimble, young, and raring to go, puts in long hours of work, and picks up the *Dahi Handi*.

Only when all the three levels work together, can the '*Dahi Handi*' be won.

Retail Career Paths at Shoppers Stop

Everyone wants to grow fast in their career. Some are capable, while some others are not. Some grow through experience and time spent in the organization. Others may grow through delivery of job. Yet some others grow through impressing and influencing the boss.

Organizations need a fool-proof system that would nurture the right talent for the right job at the right time. In a growing organization, maintaining the pipeline for current and future jobs is a key challenge. The attrition levels in retail are phenomenally high and further add to the challenge.

Realizing that the challenge could not be met in an *ad hoc* manner, we developed systematic processes and tools for assignment of people to appropriate roles, ensuring that the leadership pipeline is filled with the right people. To facilitate career growth of employees, we developed the Assessment Centre, clarified the career path for each role, and then mapped them for selected employees. For example, a Customer Care Associate can grow to be a Store Head, by clearing stages of Baby Kangaroo, Department Manager, ROM, to a Store Manager over a 8 to 10 year period. A Management Trainee can start off as a Department Manager, post-training, and then grow to a ROM, Store Manager, Area Manager, and Regional Head to an All India Operations Manager's position. Similarly, each individual Customer Care Associate can see a path for his/her growth – in Role & Designation. On the B&M side, a Management Trainee can grow from an Assistant Merchandiser to Deputy Merchandiser,

The key foundation of retail success has definitely been talent management. Most management effort is dedicated to attracting, retaining, and growing talent. This strategy has worked wonders for Shoppers Stop.

Merchandiser, Assistant Category Manager, Category Manager, Trading Manager, and finally to B&M Head, over a 10 to 15 year period.

The Heads of both the functions have the prospect of leading the All India Functions of B&M and Operations and can ultimately become the COO, CEO, or Head of the Company or Divisions.

Assessment Centres

We adopted the Assessment Centre methodology almost 10 years back to identify the right talent for the next level. We intended to scale up at a pace of more than 20 per cent every year by adding a lot of stores across India and this needed a large pool of talent at every store level and at the Services Office – a team that could scale up their capabilities along with the growth of the Company.

The Assessment Centres determine the individuals' ratings against specific competencies that are required for a specific role. The design was adapted from an international programme that was used as a benchmark. The top management itself went through an assessment programme to understand the relevance of the programme and check out their own competencies. This method uses a combination of tools such as group discussion, personal interview, case study, in-basket/trays, mathematical/analytical puzzles, etc.

We use a mix of internal and external assessors depending on the role and its importance. We also train assessors internally, as the number of Assessment Centres conducted every year are pretty large.

The level of difficulty and competencies change as per the role and level. While grade promotions can happen through yearly appraisals and experience, role change has to go through assessments, especially in the two key streams of operations and buying and merchandising.

From the beginning, we have faced two objections to this method:

- Many participants feel that it is like a one-day cricket match. If they underperform on that day - they lose at

least six months to a year.

- The assessment does not consider participants' on-the-job performance.

We have used the feedback to strengthen the process and make it bias-free. Also, with multiple tools to check competency, the one-day failure is actually not a reality. This is communicated to our employees to assuage their fears and criticisms. Additionally, Development Centres have been set up to provide our employees with an opportunity to acquire skills that may be needed in the future.

The Development Centres were started two years after the Assessment Centres were operationalized. Typically,

the Development Centres act like 'Semi Final Programmes'. They identify the key issues in an individuals' competency portfolio, after which, the HR team tailors a programme for improvement in each of the parameters. This is done through projects, team work, case studies, store visits, exposure, and mentoring. Once an individual has gone through a programme at the development centre, he/she is better prepared for an Assessment Centre, and even those who fail are in a better position to accept the results than earlier, as they acknowledge and understand the efforts underlying the whole process.

We also have a unique programme – *Baby Kangaroo* – at the starting point of

a Customer Care Associates' career. It utilizes the concept of a Mother Kangaroo and her Joey whom she protects and nurtures till he/she is ready to take off on its own. All fresh front-end Associates who spend a year on the job are eligible to appear for the Programme. After clearing the Assessment Centre Programme, the Associates go through MAST (Managerial and Supervisory Training) spread over 37 days. They are mentored under an experienced supervisor before they take on the actual role. As an organization, we believe that every manager should be capable of conducting training; and hence, these Associates go through 'Train the Trainer' programme and are assessed on the delivery skills in areas like customer service, retail selling skills, and product knowledge, etc. Apart from the above, associates are trained through vari-

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ous courses to take up bigger responsibilities.

Being a member of the IGDS (Intercontinental Group of Department Stores), we nominate all our key managers for the *Strategic Retail Management (SRM)* Programme conducted by them. Managers from all functions including operations and buying and merchandising have attended the Programme which has helped in enhancing their strategic perspective. We identify young potential managers and nominate them for the "IGDS High Potential Programme" annually. Our exchange programmes help them understand the best practices adopted.

IGDS membership is only by invite and consists of only one department store from each country. It has famous retailers like, Woolworths from Australia, Bloomingdales from USA, Printemps from France, Central from Thailand, and Parksons from Malaysia. The programme is run by the IGDS secretariat and all members can send two or three nominees. The participants are guided by the CEO of one of the IGDS companies. They present their report in the bi-annual/annual summits of IGDS.

In another initiative – The Hi Pot Programme – Managers interact with their counterparts from global retail companies, enhancing their knowledge of best retail practices.

Learnings and the Way Ahead

The biggest challenge in all such assessments is the fairness of the Centre and the belief of the participants in the system followed by the Centre.

As mentioned earlier, we have tried to instill faith in the system by using trained assessors – both internal and external. The HR Head also runs through the results to ensure that there is no bias in the assessment. One needs to continuously improve and update the tools, cases, and assignments as Associates get used to various tests over the years. Over the past 10 years,

The front-end team is working 365 days of the year – through Diwali and Christmas, sacrificing their holidays to serve the customers. Over the years, we have therefore made conscious attempts to develop the culture of empathy and respect through various initiatives.

for different roles and it is important to bring empathy among the various team members spread across the stores located in various cities. This is especially required as the front-end team is working 365 days of the year – through Diwali and Christmas, sacrificing their holidays to serve the customers. Over the years, we have therefore made conscious attempts to develop the culture of empathy and respect through various initiatives.

Common Designation

The starting point of all these initiatives has been the removal of overt signs of hierarchy by introducing a common designation, 'Customer Care Associate,' for all the team members. From the Managing Director to the Store Planner or the front-end Sales Associate – each one is first referred to as Customer Care Associate. The Associates

this method has provided us with the CEO, B&M Heads, Trading Managers, Category Managers, Store Managers, etc., and majority of them have actually delivered brilliantly in their jobs. This reaffirms our belief that it is a robust programme which has grown from strength to strength.

Enabling Culture

At Shoppers Stop, we believe that it is important to have an enabling culture in the organization that encourages performance, openness, and growth. Retail, as we saw earlier, requires different kind of competencies and talent

feel proud to share the same designation; it helps reinforce that all employees are part of one team that exists because of and for the customer who is paying for their salary. It encourages the team to be humble and united and on par with each other. It enhances the service leadership qualities amongst all managers.

Values

We have carefully chosen and adopted the following key values which guide the behaviour of all the employees:

Four years ago, Shoppers Stop started the practice of singing an Anthem every day at 10.45 am in all the stores and service offices across the country. Very few organizations have utilized the force of a song to get their teams charged up.

- We will not take what is not ours
- We will uphold the obligation to dissent
- We will have an environment conducive to openness
- We will have an environment for innovation
- We will have an environment for development
- We will have willingness to apologize and forgive
- We will respect our customers' rights
- We will create an environment of trust
- We will be fair
- We will be socially responsible.

These values help the team to face various challenges that appear from time to time. For example, although we do not accept any gifts, we continue to receive gifts on various occasions. These gifts are deposited in the CEO's Office and auctioned every year, the proceeds from which are sent to CRY.

Satisfaction Indices

Shoppers Stop commissions three annual satisfaction surveys which are conducted by an independent international research agency. The surveys include Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), Associate Satisfaction Index (ASI), and Partner Satisfaction Index (PSI). The results of the surveys are treated as interdependent and in combination, indicate the health of the organizational culture in dealing with its customers, associates, and supplier partners.

It is firmly believed that if associates are happy, then both the customers and supplier partners would be happy. The surveys are not treated as mere rituals undertaken to increase the 'feel good' factor of managers. Instead, they are given weightage in the Balance Score Card of every individual's performance appraisal. The ASI/CSI scores help the managers to take corrective actions and improve

performance.

Anthem

Four years ago, Shoppers Stop started the practice of singing an Anthem every day at 10.45 am in all the stores and service offices across the country. Very few organizations have utilized the force of a song to get their teams charged up. The Anthem, "Hadh Se Aage," written by Gulzaar, sung by Sonu Nigam, and composed by Ram Sampath is unique in its power to bind and inspire people. This song

unites all employees in the spirit of delivering a service standard that is beyond the capabilities of individual employees. It also helps the store to start the day with an adrenaline rush that keeps the employees in high spirits. Most employees feel that it creates a sense of oneness in all the stores and offices across the country.

Within the retail Industry, we boast of the most loyal and long-serving retail management team. Majority of the top management team members at Shoppers Stop have spent more than ten years in the organization.

Concluding Comments

We, at Shoppers Stop, have always believed in team power as the key factor for success in retail. Our efforts in attracting, training, retaining, and

growing the talent pool have met with success in different metrics. Within the retail Industry, we boast of the most loyal and long-serving retail management team. Majority of the top management team members at Shoppers Stop have spent more than ten years in the organization. Our Associate Satisfaction Scores along with PSI and CSI have held on well. Our attrition in the back-end has been relatively low. Most importantly, majority of the top positions have been filled by internal candidates. We are extremely thrilled to share that the Govinda Pyramid does work well and can meet international metrics and challenges head on. 

Leader and Leadership Development at IBM

Rajshakar Krishnan

This perspective has two distinct parts. One, which gives an overall description of IBM's leadership development philosophy and method and the other which

provides a portrayal of who is a leader. The first piece is descriptive and the second piece is contemplative and comes out of the experience of the writer in his current

role and his philosophical stance towards life and being.

Part A: The Organizational Journey of IBM into Leadership Development

It is appropriate to begin this article with a quote of Lou Gerstner from his book *'Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?'* - *"The work-a-day world of business isn't about fads and miracles. There are fundamentals that characterize successful enterprises and successful executives:*

- *They are focused*
- *They are superb at execution*
- *They abound with personal leadership.*"⁷

As Noel Tichy says, "A number of management theorists don't buy the argument that leadership is the key factor in determining an organization's success; they assert that a winning culture or efficient work processes, or any number of ancillary attributes are the *sine qua non* of success. I agree with them that those things are important. But leadership takes precedence over everything else Without leaders, good results are a matter of random chance, and therefore unsustainable."⁸

IBM is celebrating its centenary this year which is a testament to its sustained success. It has weathered numerous storms and crises over the years and is seen as a dominant force in the technology sector. It has produced generations of leaders across national cultures – leaders, who have successfully carried forward the corporate mission in their respective countries. What is the secret of IBM's sustained success? What has been the rationale behind its leaders' achievements and how does it develop leaders to sustain growth and momentum? This article seeks to address these questions from the perspective of a leadership development professional as well as an IBMer who heads the leadership development practice for IBM India.

⁷ Gerstner Jr., Lois V (2002). *Who Says Elephant's Can't Dance ?* London: Harper Collins Publishers, pp 217.

⁸ Tichy, Noel and Cohen, Eli (2003). *Why are Business Leaders Important in Business Leadership*, New Delhi: Jossey Bass, Wiley Eastern, pp 4-5.

Values

As Sam Palmisano, the Chairman and CEO of IBM, says in the booklet on IBM values which is given to every IBMer on joining: "Many companies define themselves in terms of technologies, products, pricing or even individual personalities. This can work well for a time, but when the world changes, they often find themselves adrift. Just look at our own industry. Its history is littered with companies that had their moment in the sun but they no longer exist or are largely irrelevant. I believe that is because they anchored themselves – their business models, brands, and cultures – to things that did not endure. IBM was different. From its inception nearly a century ago, our company has been grounded in strongly held beliefs. These values shaped our market place identity, our policies and practices. They committed IBM to a broad definition of

leadership – to be a trusted partner for customers, a reliable long-term investment, a progressive employer, and a responsible corporate citizen. They guided the company through decades of extraordinary change."

The current generation of IBMers is unlike any of its predecessors. Majority of our workforce in India has been with IBM for fewer than five years. And, while earlier IBM used to hire most of its people straight out of school, today, it also hires many experienced professionals, and many more come into IBM through outsourcing and acquisitions. These differences pose challenges in sustenance of the IBM culture.

While the values are universal in their applicability to all IBMers, it is the leaders who are exemplars and embodiments of the values. The crux of leadership development at IBM is in the socialization and internalization of values.

Questions such as: How do we ensure, despite our size and complexity that we work as a unified team, in a manner that delivers on the promise of IBM's brand and business model? How do we deal with the changed expectations of the IBM workforce gaining significance? We recognize that values must be genuinely shared; they can't be imposed top down.⁹ They must be genuinely shared values. The values are the connective tissue that has longevity.¹⁰

⁹ Palmisano, Samuel J (2004). *Our Values at Work –On Being an IBMer*.

¹⁰ Kanter, Rosabeth Moss (2010). *Leadership in Globalizing World in Hand book of Leadership Practice*, Boston: Harvard Business Press, pp 580.

One of the early leadership actions that Sam Palmisano took when he became the Chairman and CEO was to refresh the IBM values through a unique participative process involving Web chats open to all IBMers. The values distilled from the exercise are presented below:

- Dedication to every client's success
- Innovation that matters for our company and the world
- Trust and personal responsibility in all relationships.

It is these values that are the fundamental drivers of leadership behaviour at IBM. While the values are universal in their applicability to all IBMers, it is the leaders who are exemplars and embodiments of the values. The crux of leadership development at IBM is in the socialization and internalization of values.

Socialization at IBM is driven at multiple levels:

The first level is for the new employee. *Succeeding @ IBM* is a two-year programme designed to provide all new employees with the resources they need to develop into fully realized IBMers starting from the moment they choose to join the company.

The second level is designed for the newly appointed managers. In the leadership development intervention for new managers, called *Basic Blue for IBM leaders*, practising leaders and executives provide instruction on values and their own leadership journey within the organization.

The third level is for the senior managers and is titled, *The Integration & Values Team (I&VT)*. Senior leaders from around the world, who occupy key positions in IBM are selected by the Chairman to work as a team to integrate IBM based on its values. Members are viewed as an asset of IBM, not as representatives of the individual unit or position to which they are assigned. It is expected that I&VT members will act in the best interest of the enterprise first.

Systematic Leadership Development: How IBM Develops Leaders?

It is interesting to step back in time and hear Thomas J Watson Jr., "Our training methods at that stage (1957) were still surprisingly primitive. We had our sales school and machine school, but nothing to teach a person how to be someone's boss. A branch manager would call a salesman in and say, "You're promoted to assistant manager. Be careful with people, don't swear and wear a white shirt".....I took one of our most gifted sales managers and put him in charge of executive development. At first he was using cases straight from Harvard Business School. I took him aside one day and said, in my usual undiplomatic way, if our company was going to be unique, we had to teach something unique. He said, I thought

you want them educated to be good managers. "You don't understand," I said, "I want them educated in IBM management: communications, supreme sales and service efforts, going to a guy's house if his wife is ill, seeing if you can help out, making post-death call." You couldn't read that in some other manual. They were practices we had built up over the years, and new IBM managers had to know them in addition to technology. So, he changed direction and the training system became so good that eventually we made a rule that people could not manage anything until they went to management school. The course lasted two weeks to six weeks, and I made sure that I or another top executive visited

In the context of IBM, it is the values that provide the fabric of developing one's leadership capabilities. While it is assumed that all leadership development is self-development, the organization plays a crucial role in providing the opportunities and tools for growth.

each group of trainees that went through because it was critical for them to see who they were working for."¹¹

Leadership development has come a long way since the humble but dramatic beginning described by Watson. To understand IBM's current leadership development efforts, a few fundamentals of the situation need to be considered. IBM is the world's largest information technology company; its revenues are in the order of \$100 billion per annum; currently, it has operations in 170 countries. It has 400,000 full-time employees, 50 per cent of its

¹¹ Watson Jr., Thomas J (1990). *My Life at IBM and Beyond*, New York: Bantam Books, Father, Son & Co, pp 303.

workforce has less than 5 years of service with IBM, and 40 per cent of its employees work remotely that is not from a traditional IBM office.

As a globally integrated enterprise, the compulsions are to make informed choices in global market, secure unique value in a network of open partners, leverage the power of global assets, embrace open collaboration and knowledge sharing practices, and operate seamlessly across boundaries via value, processes, and skills. Given these challenges, it is imperative to have a charged and electric leadership and leadership pipeline too for the present and the future!

The Integrated Leadership Development Plan deployed by IBM is understandably colossal in conception and mammoth in execution. It is divided into three phases:

Planning – This phase consists of the following elements:

- Defining all roles across IBM
- Creating success profile for all leadership roles
- Defining demand for leadership roles through business unit and market
- Identifying critical gap role (requiring accelerated development and recruitment).

Pipeline Identification and Development – This phase consists of:

- Regularly evaluating leadership competencies of those in leadership positions
- Assessing leadership potential and functional skills with verification.
- Providing guidance on potential career paths and personalized development plan
- Providing innovative and extensive experiences and developmental opportunities.

Placement – This phase consists of:

- Defining bench strength of each leadership role ensuring diversity
- Specifying a slate of candidates, with diversity and high potential for each leadership opening
- Having a disciplined process for placement through candidate-opening drills
- Conducting annual review of leadership at all levels.

There are multiple processes and reviews to loop these phases together in a coordinated fashion across geographies and technological support through innovative applications and tools designed to support and track every element of each phase to ensure desired outcomes, i.e., a constant and ready supply of the right leaders for the right jobs at the right time.

Leader Development

In the context of IBM, it is the values that provide the fabric of developing one's leadership capabilities. While it is assumed that all leadership development is self-development, the organization plays a crucial role in providing the opportunities and tools for growth. IBM has established a 4-tier learning blend. In fact, IBM's 4-tier learning blend has provided an industry-acclaimed approach to corporate learning; and not just for IBMers, it

has been adopted by Fortune 500 companies around the world.

Traditional Classroom Training

Traditional classroom learning is a solid component of the IBM Leadership Development model. This mode of learning has many advantages. It transfers knowledge in a highly controlled environment, eliminating work distractions to allow for safe skill practice and deep reflection on fundamental principles. It enables peer learning, relationship building, social networking, and face-to-face role-play practice,

and provides an opportunity to learn via mistakes without impacting workplace results. Although traditional classroom learning offers reflection and safe practice, it is arguably not the best approach for all kinds of learning. The workplace itself can provide the ideal venue for gaining certain new work task skills and knowledge and thus forms the second tier of leadership practice.

Performance Support Learning

A second learning approach happens when carefully targeted and measured guidance is delivered at the exact moment of need, without interrupting the flow of work. Research suggests that employees become more productive more quickly, and through experience, they can understand more intuitively the relationship between subject

IBM's 4-tier learning blend has provided an industry-acclaimed approach to corporate learning; and not just for IBMers, it has been adopted by Fortune 500 companies around the world.

matter and the work (Gery, 1991)¹² when support is provided to them at the time when they need it. The metaphor for such work-embedded learning, is the automobile's Global Positioning System that automatically and instantly informs lost drivers about where they are, where they need to go, and how to get there – exactly when they need to learn that information. A spell-checker is another common example of Performance Support Learning, in which learning occurs directly within the work task or work environment itself. This experience-based approach enhances knowledge and skill as its application occurs immediately and in context within the workflow. IBM's world-class technologists have been designing, deploying, and developing Performance Support Learning into its Leadership Development workplace applications for years, most recently leveraging social networks via "IBM Excaliber" a just-in-time expert locator, and "Lotus SameTime" an instant messaging tool.

But Performance Support Learning alone may not allow for the reflection needed to convert knowledge into understanding. Nor will experience alone necessarily help learners extend their insights beyond the immediate application. Performance Support teaches "what works," but not "why it works." The learner may not see how principles of the new behaviour can be applied to new and different situations.

What is needed in conjunction with both traditional classroom learning and performance support learning is a third approach – one that provides both the workplace context and the opportunity for deeper understanding and reflection.

Work-enabled Learning

Our third approach is called Work-enabled Learning, which uses the workplace as a learning environment, bringing the learning to the work. The workplace becomes the "classroom" and the work tasks become learning activities, that enable observation and experience and reflection and review. The metaphor is the student driver

¹² Gloria Gery (1991). *Electronic Performance Support Systems*. Tolland, MA: Gery Performance Press.

IBM's world-class technologists have been designing, deploying, and developing Performance Support Learning into its Leadership Development workplace applications for years, most recently leveraging social networks via "IBM Excaliber" a just-in-time expert locator, and "Lotus SameTime" an instant messaging tool.

learning to drive on real roads, through real on-road experiences, sometimes with a teacher alongside providing guidance to stimulate proper understanding and reflection – and sometimes the teacher not being present. It cultivates skill transfer to new and different situations by meaningful interactions that happen directly within the context of work, yet with the focus on learning and understanding principles, underlying the enacted skills.

So, while the primary goal of Performance Support Learning is to help the employee to perform a task (with learning being a secondary outcome), the primary goal of

Work-enabled Learning is learning. With Work-enabled Learning, the workplace task is chosen specifically as a learning opportunity first and foremost. Task accomplishment, though important, is not its main objective. Work-enabled Learning draws upon two research-supported approaches: (a) experience and (b) observation.¹³

IBM Leadership Development calls this design 'PARR', (Prepare, Act, Reflect, and Review). It is the learner's purposeful, guided way to acquire knowledge and skills in an immediate and relevant setting through primary experience. But primary experience is not the only route to building and improving workplace skills.

Observational Learning

More than five decades of research in social learning theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997)¹⁴ suggest that observational learning is a powerful teacher, as well. Watching an accomplished and knowledgeable peer or colleague perform a task is another effective way to begin acquiring a skill, especially if the learner has the opportunity to debrief afterwards, ask questions, and review what she/ he witnessed.

Work-enabled Learning embraces the reality that most of the employee learning occurs directly in the workplace.

¹³ Based on the works of Jean Piaget, John Dewey, Karl Lewin, David Kolb, and Chris Argyris.

¹⁴ Bandura, A (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Bandura, A (1997). *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, New York: W H Freeman.

"We're making real a whole new approach to learning," says Ted Hoff, IBM's Vice President of Learning, "one that's truly embedded in work, truly pervasive day to day, not just courses." It also builds a workplace learning approach that reflects the long-standing tradition of master and apprentice, working together, learning from each other and enables employees to learn from each other on the job via networking technologies, expert connections, and instant communication such as Lotus SameTime.

There is no doubt that IBM is a technology company. "But this is not just about technology," says Steve Bartomioli, Director of IBM Leadership Development. "This is about learning – developing IBM leaders and employees through a more relevant, personalized, collaborative and – more so than ever – a work-enabled learning environment". Work has changed. Over the past decades, global employment in the manufacturing sector has fallen – from 40 per cent of total employment to less than 18 per cent. The service sector has risen from 14 per cent to more than 35 per cent. Demand for skilled jobs has risen from 40 per cent to 85 per cent, creating with it ever new knowledge gaps and skill gaps. [(Merrill Lynch, 2000)]. IBM tries to keep ahead of these trends by customizing the learning efforts of its leaders.

According to the U S Dept of Commerce, "At least 80% of employee learning happens in the workplace." A recent US Department of Labour study found that "Workplace learning is widespread across many employee interactions and serves to fulfill most learning needs, perhaps as much as 70 per cent." The learning is "ongoing, often unrecognized, and involves knowledge and skills that are attainable and immediately applicable." Whether the number is 70 per cent or 80 per cent or even 50 per cent, it is large enough for us to rethink how best to leverage the workplace to enable employees to learn the ever-changing, essential skills.

Using this methodology and approach, IBM India has been able to train a majority of its employees and is confi-

dent of its depth of leadership talent for the growth of the company in India and elsewhere.

Part B: A Personal Journey into Writing of this Colloquium and Defining Leadership

When I was invited to contribute to this leadership colloquium, I was pleasantly surprised and dashed off my immediate acceptance without giving a thought. I was

also secretly thrilled, taking the invitation to mean that I had "arrived" and felt pompous about me having something to say and the world wanting to listen to it! However, life intervened and my grandiloquent thoughts were kept in abeyance while I got engrossed with the day-to-day professional work – I would have loved to say "grind" but it does not behove a professional leadership development leader to say so!

Nevertheless, here I find myself on a quiet Saturday morning, in front of my lap top, keying these words and wondering what to do to live up to my promise. The last five words woke me up to realities of life and I realized that we all have to live up to our promises – some made to others, some made to ourselves, and some as conceived by our parents, teachers and well-wishers and some also by our detractors (alas there are many of them!)

I have prided myself on my extensive reading but realized that I had seldom

tried my hand at serious writing. I realized that this was going to be a baptism by fire: I had read about authors who had disciplined themselves to write 10,000 words a day. If they could do it, I thought surely I could, especially when my article word limit was 5,000 words. Arithmetically, half-a-day's work. I should be done by lunch! Except that I was not a professional writer!

I fell into a reverie musing over my struggle when I heard voices. These voices were talking to me in my head quite animatedly about the very topic that was bemusing me and I am happy to record this colloquy for you the reader.

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Myself : How do people write ? I want to know as I am having a writer's road block!

Overself : Well, writing is but the grandchild. The parent is thought and the grand parent is awareness – the self in all human beings. People can write when they have been thinking about something for a long period of time. But the ability to think clearly is powered by self- awareness.

Myself: I do not know who you are but your answer sounds interesting. Now, tell me who are you and can you help me write a 5,000 word article for the Leadership Colloquium? I confess I have not done much thinking on leadership and as to the self-awareness part of what you said, I am unaware of what you mean by it!

Overself: Leadership without self awareness! What have we descended to? But let me begin at the beginning and state who I am. I am your higher self – the self that you are not aware of because I am veiled behind all your thoughts, emotions, and actions. When you reach me, you have full awareness of yourself. This higher self in you is similar to the higher self in others and we are all parts of the universal self. I can definitely teach you all about leadership and writing an article is mere modification of the medium of expression – the substance is unchanged. So why don't you ask me your questions on leadership?

Myself: Whew! You have given me some weighty philosophical dope! But in the spirit of your own response which was to begin at the beginning, let me do so by asking you a basic question: What is leadership? Once I have your definition, I can build my understanding.

Overself: Brevity is the soul of wit: so here is a brief definition. Leadership is selfless service.

Myself: What do you mean by selfless? I thought you mentioned a few minutes ago that you were the higher self and therefore present in all beings and also a part of the universal self, etc. So, how can there be service without you?

Overself: A turn of phrase really! Selfless service actually means ego-less service: where you work for larger purposes and not your own petty gains. And you must be

full of the higher self to get rid of your lower self which is the ego and the pettiness in you.

Myself: Do you really find such leaders in the real world? I thought leaders are the ones who drive you towards their goals and their objectives.

Overself: What you call their goals and objectives should really be a larger cause, mission or purpose, and not a personal agenda. Only when the self that is serving is the universal self and not the personal egoistic self that leaders are truly serving.

Myself: Is that all there is to leadership? Sounds simple! Yet there are very few leaders who can be called true leaders, by your definition. Why is true leadership so rare?

True leadership is rare because there are very few who have complete self-awareness and are in touch with their higher selves.

Overself: Yes, leadership is very simple. True leadership is rare because there are very few who have complete self-awareness and are in touch with their higher selves. The people whom you call your current leaders are wayfarers on the path – they are in search of themselves. Till the search is successfully completed, the demonstration of true leadership would but be partial and incomplete.

Myself: You are making leadership sound like a mystic's quest!! I thought it was very practical: vision, mission, strategy, tactics, operations and all that stuff. Not to speak of competitive success and the next quarter's earnings.

Overself: The world is nothing but the mind. And the mind is nothing but the reflection of the higher self. So, when you are united with the higher self, the world is yours and all material success will come to you.

Myself: Sorry, that is unacceptable. Conversely, does it also mean that those who have material success are united with their higher selves? How do you explain material success in the absence of any unity with higher self? After all, corporations are all about material success. My opinion is that no unity with higher self is required for corporate success.

Overself: Ah! I should have added the phrase 'long lasting material success'. As you are an observant and very practical person, tell me why do corporations fail after a successful stint? And, what kind of corporations are long-

lasting? Unless they are linked to eternal values which emerge from the higher self, there is little chance of enduring success.

Myself: You have given me a view of leadership from the peak of a mountain. It seems too distant. Tell me something that I can do now.

Overself: What you can do now is very simple. Always remember that in the sky of your mind, I am the sun. Pay attention to the task at hand in the brightness of my light. Do not cast your shadow. Pay Attention. Pay Attention.

Now. Now.

I woke up from my reverie and discovered it was time for lunch. And that I had indeed said all that I had wanted to say.

As I completed this piece and wrote the part A, I realized that my being at IBM had influenced my views about leadership that had given me the conviction and energy to work on the leadership growth journeys of thousands of young people at IBM. ✓

Growing Leaders at Infosys: An Evidence-based Approach to Leader Development

Prakash K Nair, Aarti Shyamsunder and Chitra Sarma

“The primary purpose of corporate leadership is to create wealth legally and ethically”

N R Narayana Murthy
Founder & Chairman Emeritus, Infosys

“Where have all the leaders gone?” asked Bill George, in his notable and much admired work, *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering Secrets to Creating Lasting Value* (George, 2003).¹⁵

While George’s book was published in 2003 during the Enron crisis, we know that this question is still relevant today. In fact, the situation has gotten worse. Bernie Madoff and most recently Rupert Murdoch’s examples are evidence of serious, chronic leadership gaps. It is a similar story back home in India, with our scams now reaching monumental proportions. A conceivable root cause that underlies this crisis is the acute scarcity of ethical leaders, leaders with values. Bennis (2009) captures this gaping hole in leadership well in the very first chapter of his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, where he pronounces that “the stage is littered with flawed and disappointing leaders.”¹⁶ The seriousness of these gaps is not lost on those of us who are tasked with developing lead-

ers. Such high-profile leadership failures and scandals including more dated examples such as Enron, Satyam, Lehman Brothers, and AIG, among others, have emphasized the need for a scientific, value-driven approach to the selection, management, and development of organizational leaders.

Since its inception in 1981, values have been the cornerstone of the Infosys philosophy. The founders, starting with N R Narayana Murthy, have shown unwavering and unflinching adherence to values. In the book, *Leadership @ Infosys*, Narayana Murthy points at values as the singular most critical factor that will sustain Infosys into the future (Barney, 2010)¹⁷. This definitive statement demonstrates the primacy of values in the way we grow our business and in the way we grow people, including our leaders.

The emphasis our senior-most leaders, including Mr. Murthy, have always placed on values is not lost on our various stakeholders, including clients. As a leader in IT and business consulting services, Infosys has been privileged to enjoy a reputation of ethical conduct and high-integrity leadership. Yet, recognizing the potential risk of failed leadership and the necessity of developing a healthy pipeline of future leaders, the Infosys Leadership Insti-

¹⁵ George, W (2003). *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value*, CA: Jossey-Bass.

¹⁶ Bennis, W (2009). *On Becoming a Leader*, NY: Basic Books.

¹⁷ Barney, M (Ed.) (2010). *Leadership @ Infosys*, Penguin Books India.

tute (ILI) has reinvigorated the approach to leader identification and development by anchoring it in science and latest available evidence. It is in this context that we introduce leader and leadership development at Infosys.

ILI was established in 2001 by Mr. Narayana Murthy and Dr. G K Jayaram, Infosys' first Chairman, to grow leaders who will sustain Infosys through its values. As employees of ILI, the authors have the exciting yet daunting task of realizing this vision. We discuss these values, critical performance dimensions Infosys leaders are expected to have or acquire through the leader development process. This includes how we select, develop, and evaluate leaders' progress. We pay particular attention to the science that supports our approach.

Values @ Infosys

In 2000, the company decided to formally codify the values in such a way that would generate excitement and a shared ownership of our values. The Infosys Board members along with the senior leadership team, members of the Voice of Youth,¹⁸ and a sample of employees representing different cross-sections of the company discussed the current understanding and concerns about the value system. Eventually, through an iterative process where participants provided real-life examples, a consolidated set of primary and non-negotiable values were developed.

It was ensured that these values were applicable across cultures and would stand the test of time.

The values were put together in an easy-to-remember or recall format, with the acronym C-LIFE, which stood for Customer Delight (recently revised to "Client Value"), Leadership by Example, Integrity and Transparency, Fairness and (the Pursuit of) Excellence.

At Infosys, these values answer the question, "How will we achieve this vision that we have for ourselves?" It is a commitment to the way the organization will act in a given situation. The values act as guiding stars for each

¹⁸ An internal organization where young Infosys employees (Infoscions) represent their generation to inform policy and serve as a liaison with senior management

Infoscion. They inform:

- the behaviour expected from each employee
- the foundation for all processes within the organization
- the practices of the organization within and with respect to society and other stakeholders.

Since values are the fulcrum of any organization, it is vital to build in flexibility in order to transition to a fresh set of values if the business, social or global environment changes. A case in point being the decision to change Customer Delight to Client Value and Pursuit of Excel-

lence to Excellence in a recent Annual Strategic Planning Meeting held in January 2011 at Mysore, India. Here is a brief description of the current C-LIFE values:

Recognizing the potential risk of failed leadership and the necessity of developing a healthy pipeline of future leaders, the Infosys Leadership Institute (ILI) has reinvigorated the approach to leader identification and development by anchoring it in science and latest available evidence.

C - *Client Value*: a commitment to generating original ideas in the client's best interest thus discharging our professional responsibilities in a manner that leads to long-term partnering relationships

L - *Leadership by Example*: a commitment to set standards in our business and transactions and be an exemplar for the industry and our own teams

I - *Integrity and Transparency*: a commitment to be ethical, sincere, and open in our dealings

F - *Fairness*: a commitment to be objective and transaction-oriented, thereby earning trust and respect

E - *Excellence*: a commitment to constantly improve ourselves, our teams, our services and products so as to become the best.

The book "*Leadership at Infosys*" contains numerous examples of how these values have been practised in the organization, especially by very senior leaders.

In order to sustain the values in a very positive and encouraging way, events such as the annual excellence awards were given shape and these have now become an integral part of life at Infosys. Besides being consistent with C-LIFE, the annual excellence awards at Infosys also highlight leadership role models for all to follow.

Science as the Basis for Leader Development

Being evidence-based also requires an organization to inculcate a culture of making decisions based on measurements or research where it exists, and only using 'gut feel' decisions where data do not exist. Further, our approach to operations follows our desire to show respect to all stakeholders, basing everyday operations on a model of consistent excellence. In fact, the Infosys Leadership Institute (ILI) was created partly as a result of an evaluation by Infosys using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) criteria that placed the highest emphasis on leadership in driving business results. ILI's current vision is to be a globally recognized institution that grows leaders and advances the field of leadership development. In October 2009, ILI was reorganized to provide heightened focus on the leadership development needs of the senior-most and high potential leaders known internally as 'Tier leaders'. ILI's new focus includes ensuring that any development is tailored to the needs of each leader, per-

Infosys Leadership Institute (ILI) was created partly as a result of an evaluation by Infosys using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) criteria that placed the highest emphasis on leadership in driving business results.

forming original research relevant to executing Infosys strategy, warranting sufficient bench strength of leadership talent to succeed senior roles, and mitigating the risk of leader succession.

To develop these senior-most leaders or "tier leaders," ILI proposed a nine-dimension model. The model was developed by studying the approaches of eighteen global companies, and by examining relevant research in the area of leadership and leader development. Each dimension, called a 'pillar,' has its own unique significance to the development of leadership at the individual level. The model was further refined with the modified version having seven dimensions instead of nine. Two of the original nine, Adversity and Transition Leadership, are now subsumed within a third 'pillar,' Change

Leadership. All of ILI's offerings are aligned with this model, including the multisource (360 degree) feedback instrument, the instructor-led courses or workshops, mento-ring, e-learning, and the various forms of experi-

Table 1: ILI's Leadership Dimensions

Leadership Dimension	Definition
Strategic	Establishing and committing to a long-range course of action to accomplish a long-range goal or vision that sustainably gives Infosys an edge. Continuously creating new differentiators, and challenging assumptions made about current strategies in order to continually move ahead of competition.
Relationship/Networking	Developing, maintaining and leveraging long-term internal and external relationships/networks. Building effective relationships beyond transactions with all internal and external business partners to the point of being a completely trusted advisor.
Talent	Selecting, developing and managing the performance of a team capable of executing the vision. Attracting, developing and retaining highly capable individuals to build the leadership pipeline are central. Similarly, creating an effective work climate to drive performance, and requisite learning is critical.
Change, (includes Transition and Adversity)	Managing through the inevitable sources of resistance that comes with transformational leadership. Devising change strategy, and creating processes and systems that mitigate the risk of adoption of new innovations is key.
Operational	Leading operations involves systematically applying a portfolio of methods that achieve high degrees of efficiency, productivity and quality. Institutionalizing a culture of achievement; proactive prevention of defects, process innovation and improvement in order to realize goals around delighting customers consistently and sustainably.
Content	Creating and leveraging deep domain expertise required for success in one's role. This is critical to energizing one's strategy and team. Content leadership is about possessing and creating knowledge and mental models in one's core discipline to maintain a competitive edge .
Entrepreneurial	Incubating new business ideas, models and working arrangements in new markets, new product segments and services to drive growth.

Source: Leadership @Infosys

ential learning that ILI offers. Table 1 provides a summary definition for each of the seven dimensions.

Evidence-based Leader and Leadership Development: The Case of ILI@Infosys

Strategic Leader and Leadership Development

A strategic leader would have the vision and the needed capabilities to ensure that the firm has a sustained competitive advantage over its rivals in the marketplace. According to Barney (2011)¹⁹, competitive advantage is about creating more economic value than your competitors. Strategic leadership at Infosys is about developing leaders who not only create higher economic value for Infosys but also help create economic value for its clients. Hence, ensuring a supply of “strategic leaders” would in itself provide Infosys with a competitive advantage. To that end strategic leadership is one of the core leadership dimensions identified by ILI for development of senior leaders at Infosys. ILI has adopted the DIME model of strategic talent management (Silzer and Dowell, 2010)²⁰, in its approach to developing strategic leaders:

- Driven by business strategy
- Integrated with other processes
- Managed as a core business practice
- Engrained as a talent mindset

For instance, leader and leadership development efforts at ILI are *driven by critical strategic initiatives* and are *integrated with other processes*. These development efforts are only targeted toward a group of high-potentials called “Tier Leaders,” comprising about 700-800 senior leaders (selected through a highly rigorous process from Infosys’ 130,000 employees worldwide). While ILI enables these “tier leaders” to perform and develop for future roles, it does not guarantee them promotion. In other words, being focused solely on the high-potential senior leaders, ILI does not link ‘Tier Leader’ status to HR processes such

as compensation, promotion, or performance appraisals. To the extent that Tier Leaders take advantage of ILI offerings, they will reap the natural benefits of improved performance and potential and therefore can impact their likelihood of promotions and other outcomes in an indirect manner.

The development of leaders is indeed *managed as a core business practice*, evidenced by the very existence of ILI as a separate business enabling function, distinct from HR, or Education and Training functions. ILI reports to the Executive Co-Chairman of Infosys – highlighting the senior leader commitment to leader development and suc-

The development of leaders is *managed as a core business practice*, evidenced by the very existence of ILI as a separate business enabling function, distinct from HR, or Education and Training functions.

cession. Finally, development is an *engrained mindset* throughout the organization, from the time a fresh college recruit steps into the world’s largest corporate university in the Infosys campus in Mysore for up to six months of training, until the time they reach the top echelons of the corporation and become potential or prospective board members themselves. This mindset is reflected in the very job title our founder and Chairman Emeritus, Mr. N R Narayana Murthy uses — “Chief Mentor.” As the primary force behind leader and leadership develop-

ment initiatives at Infosys, Mr Murthy actively engages in developing other senior leaders such as the Tier 1 Leaders and the Executive Council members in addition to constantly challenging other members of the Board to achieve greater heights.

ILI’s Mandate

Different organizations identify critical or high-impact roles or individuals to create competitive advantage for a company, called ‘pivotal talent pools’ (Boudreau, Ramstand and Dowling, 2003)²¹. For instance, GE gained a reputation for producing successful senior executives who turned out to be such a strategic asset that they were sought after by other organizations. Merck, on the other hand, focused on identifying and recruiting leading scientific researchers in specialized fields like diabetes, and

¹⁹ Barney, J (2011). *Gaining and Sustaining Competitive Advantage* (4th ed.), New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Ltd.

²⁰ Silzer, R F and Dowell, B E (Eds.) (2010). *Strategy Driven Talent Management: A Leadership Imperative*, Jossey Bass: San Francisco.

²¹ Boudreau, J W; Ramstad, P M and Dowling, P J (2003). “Global Talentship: Toward a Decision Science Connecting Talent to Global Strategic Success,” In Mobley, W and Dorfman P (Eds.), *Advances in Global Leadership* (Volume 3), JAI Press/Elsevier Science, 63-99.

Disney once identified their cleaning crews at theme parks as the highest-impact talent because they were the ones who had the highest number of interactions with guests to the theme park. Similarly, building a pipeline of high-potential senior leaders is a strategic move for Infosys and any investment here is considered a strategic asset.

Although Infosys Tier Leaders are provided specialized and advanced development opportunities, development is by no means exclusively for them. Infosys subscribes to a hybrid philosophy of selecting and developing its employees, from the very early stages of their career until they become seasoned executives. The focus on senior leaders is based on the fact that leadership capability is often the key differentiator between organizations with sustained success such as Infosys, and other less successful organizations.²²

The Talent Lifecycle

According to Silzer and Dowell (2010)²³, organizations use five main processes to ensure that the necessary talent is available to achieve their business strategies, with most human resources programmes, systems, and processes tied to these five talent processes:

- Attract and select talent into the organization
- Assess competencies and skills in talent
- Review talent and plan talent actions
- Develop and deploy talent
- Engage and retain talent

At Infosys, at least four of these five processes fall squarely within the purview of ILI's vision and mission, as it relates to senior high-potential leaders. Engaging and retaining them would hopefully follow from the first four, along with other HR systems that enable all of these.

Inspired by various organizational sciences including industrial/organizational psychology, systems design,

²² Holstein, W J (2005). "Best Companies for Leaders: P&G's A G Lafley is No.1 for 2005," *The Chief Executive*, (November), 16-20.

²³ *Op. cit.*

business management, and industrial engineering, ILI has developed an approach towards implementing various aspects of leader/leadership development for Infosys Tier Leaders within such a strategic talent-management perspective. The following paragraphs briefly describe this approach.

Selection/Identification

The Tier Leadership pool is categorized into Tier 1 (potential successors to the Board in 1-3 years), Tier 2 (potential successors to the Board in 3-5 years), and Tier 3 (potential successors to the Board in 6-10 years). The current process is a much improvised and efficient model compared with the earlier process for identifying the leaders into this pool which was thorough but time-consuming. It involved a nomination process followed by in-depth interviews, thus taking months to fill the tier positions. The revised approach is rigorous and leverages cutting-edge science and technology in the form of ILI's multi-source computer-adaptive assessment methodology.

Although all leaders who meet the eligibility criteria can apply, being a part of the Tier Leadership Programme is entirely voluntary. Past performance is one of the eligibility requirements although it is not deterministic in identifying someone as high-potential, given the distinction between high-performance and high-potential. "Future work potential is based on accumulated skills and experience as evidenced by past achievement, ability to learn new skills and willingness to tackle bigger, more complex or higher quality assignments" (Charan, Drotter and Noel, 2001)²⁴. ILI's Leadership Journey Series assessment, described next, is the basis for selection into the pool during ILI's annual "Tier Top-off" process.

Assessment

At ILI, assessment is considered as a critical and essential element of leadership development. Absence of a rig-

²⁴ Charan, R; Drotter, S and Noel, J (2001). *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

At ILI, assessment is considered as a critical and essential element of leadership development. Absence of a rigorous, evidence-based assessment process would mean not knowing who exactly to develop (that is who has the right potential) and what to develop (the dimensions and the levels of development needed).

orous, evidence-based assessment process would mean not knowing who exactly to develop (that is who has the right potential) and what to develop (the dimensions and the levels of development needed). ILI's 360-degree assessment tool, The Leadership Journey Series or LJS assessment, is based on the Zaccaro, Kemp and Bader (2004)²⁵ model of leadership predictors (e.g., personality, values) as well as processes (e.g., performance), which will have an impact on ultimate leadership-related outcomes. This model (Figure 1) is derived from the findings of established meta-analyses around the impact of personality, goal orientation, etc., on leadership performance. The model also incorporates Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership model (see Avolio, *et al*, 2009)²⁶. The LJS assessment integrates the Infosys leadership model into its measures in order to retain contextual interpretability. LJS is thus a unique example of a multi-source, computer-adaptive assessment that measures leadership performance and also accounts for leadership potential.

**Measuring Leaders Objectively:
The Leadership Journey Series (LJS)**

What is at the core of LJS? It is a highly objective approach for assessing and selecting leaders for tier leadership.

Succession planning at Infosys is about developing a systematic process of defining and identifying future leadership requirements, and identifying leaders to meet those requirements, in a methodical manner.

It measures performance using:

- Infosys leadership model
- Full-range leadership model
- Other performance indicators

It measures potential in terms of:

- Distal predictors of leadership (e.g., personality, values, etc.)
- Goal orientation (e.g., motivated to learn *vs.* looking good?)

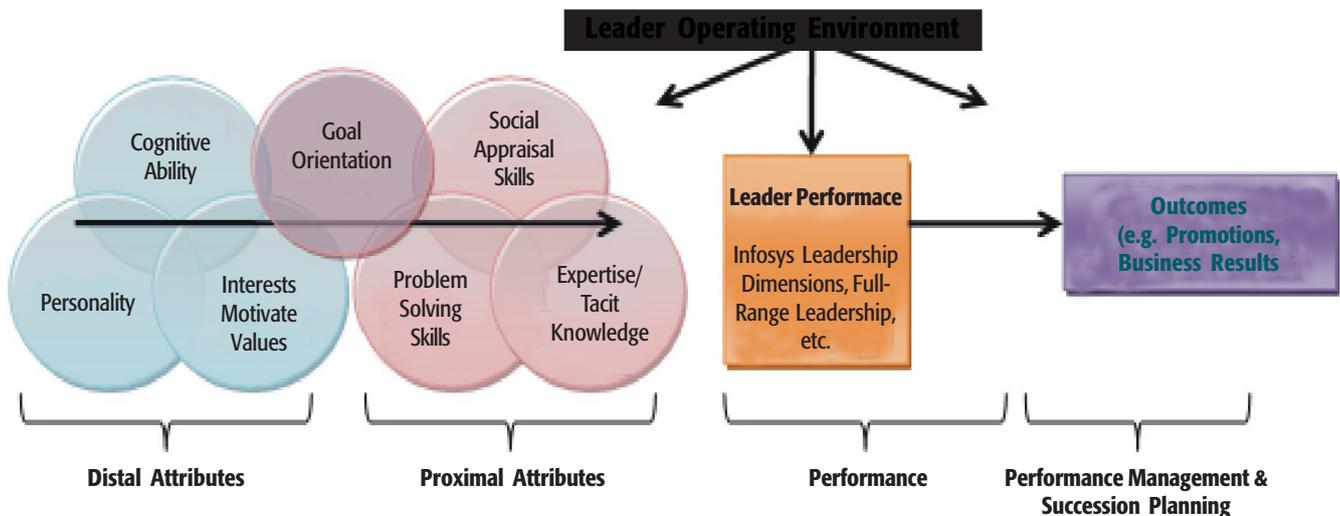
How does LJS work?

The steps for the LJS process are as follows:

lows:

- The Tier Leader nominates his/her stakeholders from whom the feedback is being sought.
- After the nomination cycle closes, ILI provides the Tier Leader and the nominated stakeholders a link which

Figure 1: The Conceptual Model



Source: Process Model adapted from Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader (2005).

²⁵ Zaccaro, S J; Kemp, C and Bader, P (2004). "Leader Traits and Attributes," In Antonakis, J; Cianciolo, A T and Sternberg, R J (Eds.), *The Nature of Leadership*, Sage Publications, 101-124.

²⁶ Avolio, B J; Reichard, R J; Hannah, S T; Walumbwa, F O and Chan, A (2009). "A Meta-Analytic Review of Leadership Impact Research: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Studies," *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20(5) 764-784.

they can access to provide feedback through the computer adaptive assessment system.

- The system allows for automated report generation which is then used in coaching/feedback sessions and creating personal development plans.
- ILI prepares the report for the Tier Leaders based on the feedback and shares the report with the Tier Leader and helps him/her chart out a developmental action plan.

LJS has been validated successfully as a development tool, and is currently being repurposed for the use of Tier Leader selection/identification. It is a 360-degree/multi-source, computer-adaptive assessment that utilizes Rasch Measurement Methods that offer better precision and accuracy. As such, it is a distinctive and useful tool designed to help identify leaders' strengths and weaknesses and thus focus them on a couple of areas of development in a more structured manner.

Development

Van Velsor and McCauley (2004)²⁷ describe leader development as the "expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes". In order to enable the development of Tier Leaders and expand their capacities, ILI has adopted the following approaches:

- *Personalized 'coaching' relationship:* Starting with the results of the LJS assessment, ILI's development specialists offer feedback sessions for each of the Tier Leaders who opt for it. The sessions include highly personalized one-on-one sessions and group-coaching sessions, where coaching is done in small groups. Through these sessions, ILI coaches assist leaders in identifying action plans around their personal development, and provide them with concrete suggestions that include the many developmental interventions available to them. In short, ILI's development specialists or 'coaches' work with Tier Leaders set goals, iden-

tify developmental interventions, and facilitate their development journey.

- *Structured developmental roadmaps:* All development offerings are structured around the framework of the Infosys leadership model. Offerings are categorized as foundational, intermediate, and advanced. Leaders choose the levels based on their differing developmental needs. In addition, offerings span the spectrum of blended learning approaches starting from knowledge acquisition (e.g., books, podcasts, video clips, e-learning) to application via practice (e.g., experiential learning, computer-based simulations, and serious games), and knowledge dissemination (e.g., mentoring, "Leaders Teach" sessions where senior experts offer their views on various topics; this in turn, is knowledge acquisition for the recipients thus perpetuating the learning cycle).

- *Programme evaluation:* There is no dearth of recommended development and 'best practices' in the field of leader development. However, ILI feels strongly that even evidence-based approaches that have worked before in other contexts need to be evaluated in the current context to ensure ROI and effectiveness. As such, there is a programmatic evaluation methodology for various interventions allowing for comparisons across interventions and over time. This allows ILI to be sure that the differential investments made in the Tier Leadership process really pay off.

- *Leaders' role in development:* All the tier leaders are expected to develop themselves and mentor and nurture junior leaders. This environment of support, feedback, and renewal is central to Infosys' approach to developing leaders. Significantly, meta-analytic research highlights the importance of leaders creating a supportive climate for learning investments to payoff. (Blume, et al, 2010)²⁸.

With the founding members of Infosys slowly leaving the organization one at a time, concomitant with the rapid growth of the organization, there is a fear that the culture and values that have allowed Infosys to succeed so far may dissipate.

²⁷ VanVelsor, E and McCauley, C D (2004). "Our View of Leadership Development," In McCauley, CD and VanVelsor, E (Eds.), *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1-22.

²⁸ Blume, BD; Ford, J K; Baldwin, TT and Huang, J L (2010). "Transfer of Training: A Meta-analytic Review," *Journal of Management*, 36(4), 1065-1105.

Succession Planning/Forecasting

Succession planning/forecasting is the means to accomplish our ultimate goal of de-risking senior leadership. Evidence shows that leadership accounts for more than 44 per cent of the variation in profit and 47 per cent of the variation in market capitalization (Weiner and Mahoney, 1981)²⁹; and 45 per cent of the variation in organizational performance (Day and Lord, 1988)³⁰. With such high stakes, succession planning is too important to be left to chance or 'gut feelings' of a handful of senior leaders. Succession planning at Infosys is about developing a systematic process of defining and identifying future leadership requirements, and identifying leaders to meet those requirements, in a methodical manner.

In evolving this methodology, ILI has borrowed tools from other sciences such as Systems Dynamics, Operations Research, and Industrial Engineering to create forecasting models which include factors such as: past performance (from performance review scores and other organizational metrics), future potential (from the LJS and other assessments), motivation (from leaders' own ambitions regarding future positions), labour market, logistical and other risk factors (such as proximity to retirement age and willingness to relocate if needed), with Infosys' Board holding the ultimate veto power.

The Future

Evaluation. Many of the approaches described here are relatively recent developments at Infosys. While several have been piloted and are currently deployed, not all have been implemented. As these start taking firm hold in the Tier Leader experience, programmatic evaluation and longitudinal research is called for in understanding the full impact of these initiatives. ILI has put in place the framework to conduct such an evaluation, using tools such as annual surveys and methodologies such as Rasch

²⁹ Weiner N, and Mahoney T A (1981). "A Model of Corporate Performance as a Function of Environmental, Organizational, and Leadership Influences," *Academy of Management Journal* 24(3), 453-470.

³⁰ Day, D V and Lord, R G (1988). "Executive Leadership and Organizational Performance: Suggestions for a New Theory and Methodology," *Journal of Management*, 14(3), 453-464.

Measurement and Latent Growth or Curve Analyses (Singer and Willett, 2003)³¹, which capture individual development trajectories over time. Such approaches provide us with the knowledge of which interventions are effective over time for what sort of leaders, thus enabling further personalized leader development approaches in the future.

Alignment. In order to align talent management activities and functions, ILI is proactively building connections with various functions that enable leader development, ensuring connections between strategic imperatives, HR processes, and ILI's leader development activities.

In order to align talent management activities and functions, ILI is proactively building connections with various functions that enable leader development, ensuring connections between strategic imperatives, HR processes, and ILI's leader development activities.

Sustaining the C-LIFE culture. With the founding members of Infosys slowly leaving the organization one at a time, concomitant with the rapid growth of the organization (e.g., about 40,000 new employees will join the rolls this year), there is a fear that the culture and values that have allowed Infosys to succeed so far may dissipate. Along with the evidence-based approaches to high-potential leader identification and development already described, there is a need to sustain this more amorphous legacy of values at Infosys. Encouraging the story-telling, mentoring, and nurturing tradition of leaders, growing other leaders is one way of sustaining this legacy, and ILI will ensure that the core of all it does is

centred on C-LIFE.

While there is recognition that a lot more needs to happen to fully leverage the evidence-based approach towards identifying and developing world-class leadership talent, ILI has put the basic framework in place to allow this to occur. In order to ensure continued progress and improvement using an evidence-based approach, the focus is on long-term outcome monitoring. We will continue to monitor long-term outcomes, enhance the robustness and the effectiveness of our leadership development model, and very importantly, continue our efforts to build globally-suave and ethically grounded leaders. 

³¹ Singer, J D and Willett, J B (2003). *Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis: Modeling Change and Event Occurrence*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Leadership Development in a Multinational – An India Case

Gopal Mahapatra and Vivek Subramanian

Overview of the Organization

The organization is a successful and globally reputed player in the Information Technology industry. It has a diverse product portfolio and has been in existence for over three decades. Headquartered in the United States, it has several thousand customers including many in Fortune 100. With thousands of employees around the world, it operates in well over 100 countries. The organization combines a vertical structure with matrix reporting lines.

The organization's operations in India began in the late 1980s and have grown significantly over the years. The Indian arm is the 2nd largest development centre of the organization with a presence of virtually every line of business (LoB) that exists in its headquarters. It has a diverse employee base and nearly a quarter of the organization's worldwide talent.

The Case for Leadership Development

Rapid globalization since 1990s, demographic dynamics, and the lack of quality manpower have given thrust to talent, more so, in rapidly developing economies like India. Consequently, retaining and developing top talent in a sustained manner has become a strategic priority for such organizations.

The profile of the Indian managers has grown over the years and several of them lead teams based in other parts of the world as well. Hence, evolution of new paradigms of leadership and structured strengthening of leadership competencies was necessary. The primary trigger for the organization's focus on leadership development was the

The views expressed by the authors are their own. This write-up is for academic purpose only.

Acknowledgment. The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution of the India HR Head, HR Leaders and the Leadership team members in developing and implementing the Leadership Development Programme.

need to strengthen leadership to sustain the exponential growth of businesses in India and the world.

Phase 1: Evolution of the Leadership Framework

Globally, the organization's leadership development initiatives have been largely decentralized and are LoB-specific. Each region or LoB is empowered to develop its leadership programmes based on its business context and location-specific talent management considerations.

Rapid globalization since 1990s, demographic dynamics, and the lack of quality manpower have given thrust to talent, more so, in rapidly developing economies like India. Consequently, retaining and developing top talent in a sustained manner has become a strategic priority for such organizations.

In India, in 2005, a team of HR Managers extensively researched leadership literature, and the existing regional and LoB practices in evolving a leadership framework for the Indian arm. The objective of the approach, as envisaged by the team, was two-fold;

- To ensure leadership development at all levels in the organization in a planned and systematic manner.
- To ensure availability of a pool of global leaders from the India organization.

The broad framework (Figure 1) was then presented to the top management team (TMT), a leadership forum of LoB

heads in India. TMT, in consultation with HR, vetted the framework and decided to focus on Senior Directors and Directors (Tier 2) before extending the framework to other levels.

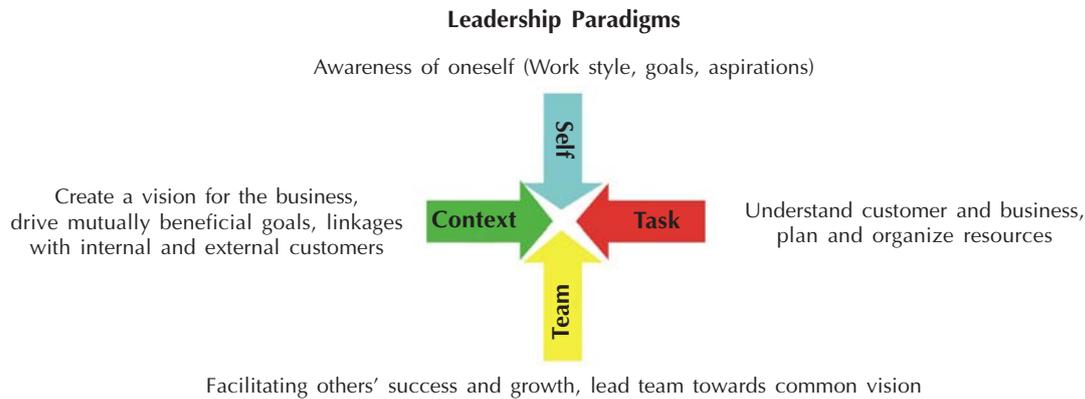
Leadership Tiers

Tier 1 (Visionary leadership) – Create a vision for the business by inspiring people and leading by example.

Tier 2 (Operational leadership) – Set long-term direction, seek ways to grow the business, align people to vision and strategy.

Tier 3 (Team leadership) – Focus on short-term results, grounded in realities of implementation, use processes to keep people on track.

Figure 1: The India Organization's Leadership Development Framework



Tier 4 (Personal leadership) – Manage self and in some cases a limited number of subordinates, focus on execution of day-to-day work.

Phase 2: Design and Development of Leadership Development Programme (LDP)

In 2007, an in-house subject matter expert (SME) team comprising HR professionals from the India organization was formed to develop a leadership development model targeted at LoB Heads, the Senior Directors, and Directors in the organization. The SME adopted a structured approach involving internal and external benchmarking for developing the leadership development model:

Internal

- Understand the business context, challenges, and opportunities
- Profile potential participants and their developmental needs and priorities
- Study the existing leadership practices/frameworks in regions and LoBs across the organization.

External

- Study and benchmark leadership practices in IT and other leading MNCs and other Indian organizations which:
 - are reputed and high-performing
 - have institutionalized leadership development models
 - are similar to the organization in complexity and scale
- Understand leadership enablement and development offerings of reputed consulting organizations and

leading B-Schools in India.

The information gathered was consolidated, analysed, and evaluated for relevance and significance to strengthen the model for leadership development.

The commitment and involvement of senior management and SME was crucial during the development and firming up of the model. The SME consulted senior HR leaders who validated the model from a global standpoint. The model was periodically reviewed by TMT and HR leadership in India.

The final model (Figure 2) was approved by TMT and HR leadership with a mandate to implement the Leadership Development Programme..

Developmental Interventions in LDP

The developmental actions of LDP (Figure 3) are as follows:

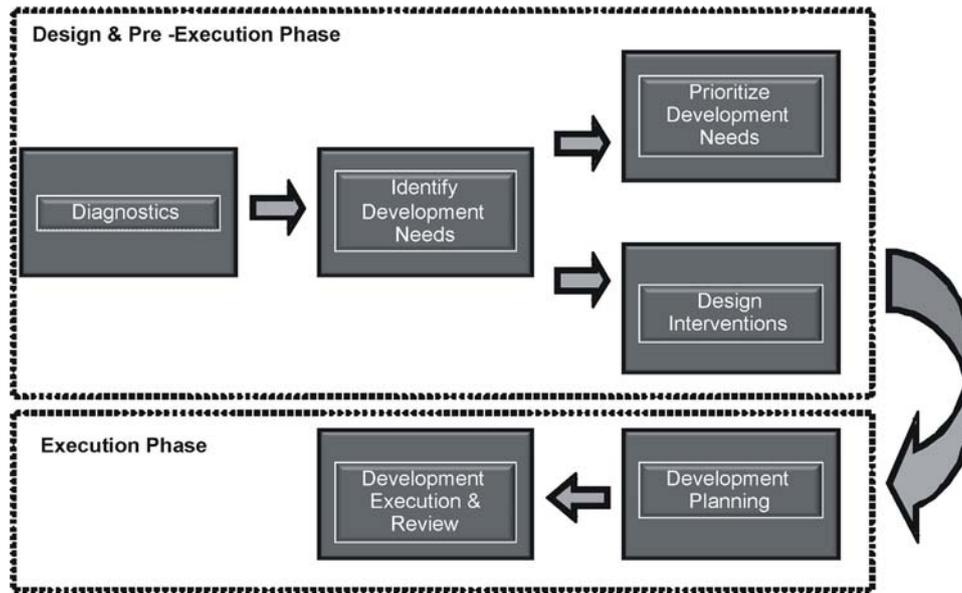
Launch and Self-Awareness Workshop

The launch of LDP was aimed primarily at preparing participants for the programme. A psychometric-based workshop on Personal Effectiveness was conducted by a globally respected expert from a learning partner firm. The participants got varied leadership perspectives through talks by an external leader and experience sharing by TMT members.

Development Centre (DC)

A leading HR consulting firm designed and conducted the Development Centre. The learning partner finalized the design and implementation based on inputs by HR

Figure 2: The Leadership Development Programme Model



leaders and TMT. They interviewed a sample of participants, their managers and direct reports to assess competencies critical to their roles that needed to be assessed in the DC.

The competencies identified for development based on the organization’s competency framework and global best practices were:

- Strategic thinking and entrepreneurship, customer focus, innovation, global mindset, managing flux, influencing, and people leadership

The design of the two-day DC included in-basket (simulation) exercises, group discussions, business presentations, psychometric tests and behavioural event interviews. Participants received preliminary one-on-one feedback from assessors at the end of the DC. This was later supplemented by detailed one-to-one discussions with participants on their strengths and development areas based on their individual DC reports.

The learning partner made a presentation to TMT and HR leaders on their observations and inferences of the participant group from the DC.

360 Degree Feedback (360 DF)

The 360 DF survey, administered through a global reputed organization in the area of 360 DF, was customized to the organization’s competency framework.

Post-completion of the survey, participants received one-on-one feedback on their strengths and development areas based on their 360 DF reports. The feedback was given by certified internal facilitators in the India organization’s HR team.

The learning partner presented the programme management team a report on the participant group’s strengths and development areas emerging from 360 DF. This report, along with the group report from the DC learning partner, provided inputs on participants’ competencies that needed strengthening through other interventions in the leadership development programme.

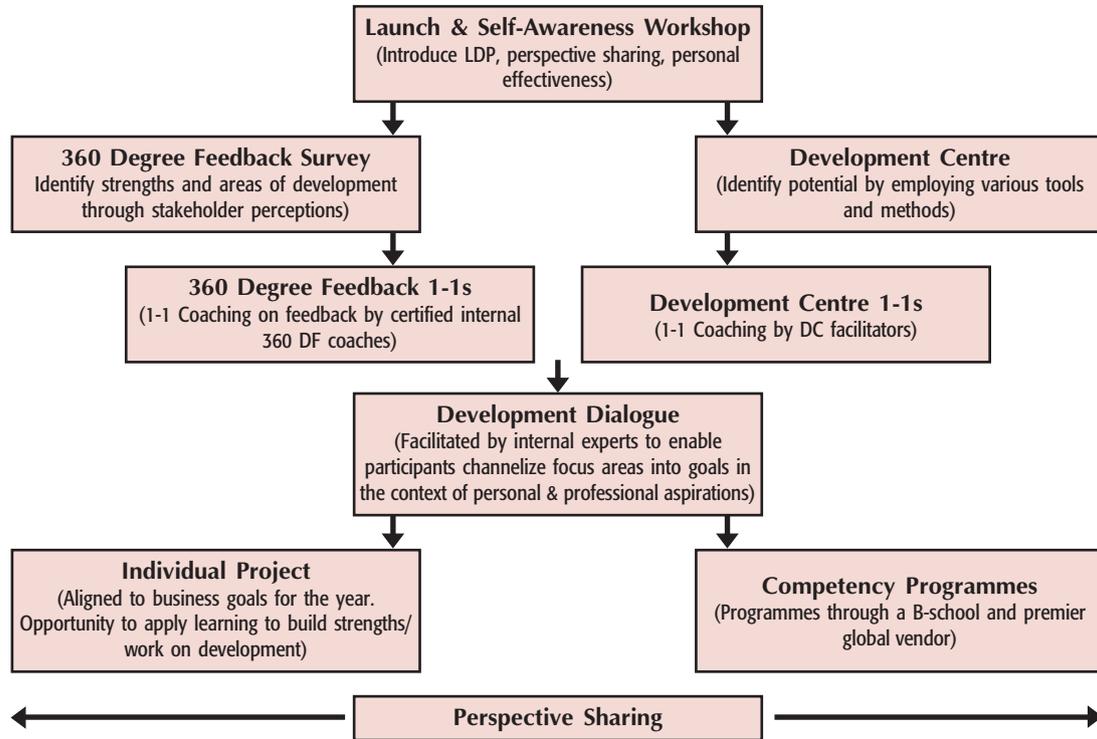
Development Dialogue

Development Dialogue was conducted post-DC and 360 DF one on one’s to enable participants to identify priority areas and development actions in the context of their long-term professional aspirations. The dialogue was facilitated by senior professionals.

Competency Development Programme

The India organization tied up with a reputed B-school to deliver programmes on leadership competencies identified for further strengthening based on the 360 DF and DC group reports. The B-school nominated faculty who would be Course Directors for the LDP. The Course Directors were briefed on the Programme and the participants by the programme management team and HR

Figure 3: Developmental Interventions in Leadership Development Programme



leaders. The programme management team and the learning partner presented 360 DF and DC findings to the course directors to enable them to customize programmes to suit the participants’ development needs.

Perspective Sharing

This was meant to supplement participants’ learning through talks on various aspects of leadership by senior executives and subject matter experts. The aim of this intervention was to broaden participants’ horizons through multiple perspectives offered by senior professionals from various organizations and industries.

All participants were required to complete a project where they had to study issues, suggest solutions, and play a leading role in their implementation. This intervention enabled participants to apply their learning to live business issues to strengthen their competencies. The design of the project component underwent changes from the first offering to the second. In LDP 1, participants were asked to work on projects in groups of five. The focus of the project was on business issues in LoBs other than the one the participants worked in. Based on the challenges with group projects, arising out of the organization’s matrix and vertical structure, it was decided to switch to

individual projects in LDP 2. It was felt that implementation of projects, especially by teams, may be less challenging in a unified organization.

Implementation of LDP

From the India HR team, a Director and a Senior Manager were assigned the task of managing the programme. The programme management team’s (PMT) responsibilities included seeking nominations through a defined process, engaging with participants, sponsors and learning partners, ensuring programme effectiveness through participant learning and inter-linkages across interventions, programme implementation and post-programme review by TMT.

Nomination from LoBs to LDP was based on the following criteria:

- A Senior Director or a Director with potential to assume leadership positions at the next level
- High-performers with high potential (top talent)
- Experience of at least one year in the India organization (screened and approved by VP for the LoB and HR)

The inaugural batch of the leadership development pro-

gramme (Feb'08-Feb'09) had 27 participants from across the various LoBs. The participants represented 13 per cent of the overall Sr. Director and Director population in the India organization.

Action research, post-LDP, was conducted by the programme management team. PMT studied the implementation of the programme and, with support from HR and TMT, implemented changes. Based on their review of the inaugural batch and feedback from participants, TMT gave a mandate to go ahead with the next batch. A total of 32 participants, across various LoBs, were part of LDP 2.

Action Research

PMT carried out action research at the end of both the LDPs. The highlights of the findings are mentioned below.

Programme Feedback (Qualitative)

Strengths

- Self-awareness through DC and 360 DF and the one-on-ones
- Competency development programmes
- Perspective sharing sessions by leaders
- Scope for peer interaction

Focus Areas

- Need to enhance peer interaction beyond the leadership development programme
- Devote adequate time and attention to application of learning (Project)

It was also found that after 2.5 years, 89 per cent of the participants of LDP 1 and all participants of LDP 2 continue to be employees of the organization. Of those who have stayed on 10 per cent have had changes in roles since their LDPs and 10 per cent have been promoted.

Learning and Suggestions

- As participants go through LDP, it is critical that PMT plays the role of an integrator of various interventions to enhance participants' experience and learning. In

fact, PMT ensured that all learning partners were briefed on the objectives of the Programme and the specific developmental role played by each of the learning partners and internal facilitators. PMT also vetted each of their design outlines to ensure a logical flow of developmental actions in line with the stated objectives.

- The authors advocate the use of multiple tools to identify strengths and development needs of participants. In the LDPs, there was a high degree of correlation between the development areas of participants as identified through 360 DF and DC.

- The duration of LDP 1 was 12 months with 17 days of intervention excluding the 3 months which the participants devoted on projects. This required a very long-term commitment from participants to the programme. Based on participant feedback, it was decided to compress LDP 2 to 10 months without compromising on the number of days of intervention. It was felt that given the pressure on the participants to hold their attention and get them to commit on the leadership development agenda, duration is an important consideration.

- Perspective sharing by internal and external leaders and subject matter experts can be a powerful input for enriching participants' learning experiences. It enables participants

to broaden their horizons by getting a first-hand insight into diverse business contexts and the leadership styles of leaders.

- Since the participants are from various LoBs, there is a need to unfreeze and integrate them with one another to prepare them better for learning. This would also help increase the level of peer interaction and learning. Hence, from LDP 3 onwards, an outward-bound programme has been suggested at the beginning of the programme to facilitate peer sharing and integration. This integration is important for the participants to take responsibility for their own and their team's learning and growth. 

Perspective sharing by internal and external leaders and subject matter experts can be a powerful input for enriching participants' learning experiences. It enables participants to broaden their horizons by getting a first-hand insight into diverse business contexts and the leadership styles of leaders.

Enhancing Effectiveness of Leadership Teams – Some Experiences from the Field

Binu Philip and Balaji Kumar

Prelude

In this paper, we would detail some of the work that has been carried out towards leadership development in the organizations/business units we have been working with. While doing so, we have based our narrative on our most recent experiences. We may hasten to add that these experiences have been primarily used as a reference point and are to be solely seen as such. Similar experiences elsewhere within the organization have been extrapolated on the narrative for the sake of coherence and continuity. Suffice it to say, in other words, that the narratives are all real but are not restricted to just one business, leader or team.

We have looked at leadership team effectiveness holistically and systemically as comprising intra-personal effectiveness, inter-personal effectiveness, and overall team effectiveness, including that of the primary leaders themselves.

The journey at Microsoft, India comprises a series of ‘interventions’ and the ‘work’ in between. These interventions were more in the nature of milestones that dictated the discrete start and end points of a particular leg of a journey. They also served as ‘containers’ of collective reflection on the progress thus far, decision-making as to the next steps, and experimentation of newly-learned behaviours. It is noteworthy to mention here that, the time and space between these interventions were also equally significant from a collective learning point of view wherein an implicit – and at times informal – support system of feedback, individual and peer coaching helped the team stay on course. Some of these interventions were

Note 1: What we have described here is part of a continuing journey. The process is not yet completed and is best described as work-in-progress. Needless to mention, what we have recounted here is from the point of view and experience of the present authors. Further, it was in response to a specific context. This, however, does not amount to a ‘standard’ intervention or a recommended solution.

running concurrently. It would be no exaggeration to say that it was indeed an intricate web of interwoven processes and interventions driven by different agents at a given point in time, planned and delicately coordinated.

Context

The context which necessitated the design and deployment of the above series of interventions was primarily in the wake of leadership change at Microsoft where an internal leader took over from another leader. In the main

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instance, the outgoing leader was widely regarded as very successful – having built the business from scratch and brought a lot of credibility to it over a 6-year period. The incoming leader too has been a veteran within the organization and had been part of the business for a while and had been a peer to many of the members on the current leadership team. However, the authors and several other people in the organization saw that the styles of these two leaders were diverse from each other.

The composition of the team was such that it was prone to unconscious dynamics as is natural within any leadership team. The team comprised leaders who too were regarded as having been successful in building and establishing their respective business units. The team was diverse – some members were old-timers within the leadership team; some were new to the leadership team but had been member of the same organization for some time; and then there were others who were both new to the team and to the business. It also comprised function leaders heading enabling functions like Finance, HR, etc. These changes happened at a time when the organization was in the midst of certain significant changes which on the surface were structural in nature but had the potency to significantly alter the way in which the business units and the leaders heading these units would need to interact with each other. At the least, it called for

greater inter-dependency in relation to the delivery of business results as compared to the existing system where deliveries of each unit were independent of the other. In other words, the context required not only the need to manage change at an organizational level, but also at the team and individual level. More importantly, it mandated the need to change the 'lens' by which successful leadership had hitherto been viewed and adopt a different lens which accepted the view that a leader can have a diverse style and yet be successful and that the parameters of success too could differ from time to time and from context to context.

The Work and its Phases

Phase 1: Leading Self

In the first phase of the work, we focused on the individual leaders, around 12 of them, of the new top team and helped them understand what their strengths, development, and readiness needs were. However, the accent was more towards appreciating individual strengths and how these could be leveraged to overcome some of the limitations they might face in enhancing their role effectiveness. This was done with the help of internal and external instruments and methodologies including multi-rater surveys, proprietary instruments, and assessment tools. The aim was to help individuals gain greater awareness about their strengths, their motivators, their styles, and potential derailers. During this phase, they were provided adequate coaching support not only to enhance their understanding of themselves but also to increase their understanding of others so as to be more effective. A key feature of this phase was a careful mix of individual and team learning. There were some components that had one is to one learning through e-learning and coaching while certain modules had a collective learning component which was a segway into team effectiveness. One of the outcomes of this phase was an individual development plan that not only captured the learning and insights but also concrete actions on how they would use these insights to enhance their personal effectiveness, role effectiveness as a leader, and as a member of a leadership team.

Phase 2: Leading with Others

In the second phase, the focus shifted to enhancing interpersonal effectiveness *vis-à-vis* others and also *vis-à-vis* team members of the leadership team and also with the

leader. There were two sub-phases. The first sub-phase was around enhancing inter-personal effectiveness in one-on-one interactions and the second was around inter-personal effectiveness within a team. During the first sub-phase, one of the critical capabilities to build was around coaching. This was the result of a multi-level diagnostic that clearly indicated that coaching would be a phenomenal leverage for the leaders to exponentially enhance their impact on others. Furthermore, the underlying belief was that coaching conversations not only help the coachee but the coach also stands to learn and grow immensely. In fact, this sub-phase was an end-to-end intervention in itself that had components of assessment, training, peer learning, and practical application. The aim of this stage was to create a framework and an environment for having the right kind of conversations with others and thereby unleash the true potential of self and others. The intervention was based on cutting-edge principles and research on neuro-sciences and its application to leadership and coaching. In the effort, we partnered with world-renowned experts in the field of brain-based leadership coaching. A key outcome of this sub-phase was the building of capabilities to have solution-focused conversations as opposed to problem-centric debates. The second sub-phase had two touch points. The first touch point was a two-day workshop together as a team to understand each other's strengths and styles and how does each member complement the capabilities that the other brings to the table. The workshop was built around the strengths philosophy using the framework of a popularly available and proprietary tool. This was preceded by a deep understanding of one's individual strengths and the workshop focused more on how to apply these strengths back at work, how to leverage the strengths of others as leaders, and also to reflect on the team strengths and potential pitfalls. The second touch point was in the form of a theatre workshop around the theme of teams followed by a self-diagnosis on their functioning as a team. It started with a one and a half day long programme which focused firstly, on a space to get familiar with each other and be oneself; and secondly, to diagnose the team's behaviour towards itself, and towards one another. This was done with a mix of theatre, administration of leadership team effectiveness instrument, and reflection on the conformity and contradiction between what the team believes in and how it actually behaves. The major outcomes were: greater comfort with each other, willingness to experiment with oneself and others at a deeper level, and

understanding of the team's conflicts and contradictions.

Phase 3: Leading Change Together

The third phase, building on the first two phases, was about getting the team together and building capabilities in them to manage change within themselves and within the team. By this time, they knew what their strengths and others' strengths were; they also had mastered the art of solution-focused coaching conversations and most importantly had heightened self-awareness. Now, they had to focus on how they come together and operate more effectively as a team to lead the change that lay ahead of them. This had two components from a design point of view. One, assimilating the new leader and new members; and two, assimilating the new team in terms of its new identity. Similar to phase two, this was an intervention in itself and also a part of the leadership development journey. End-to-end it was spread over nine months and had three major touch points. In this phase, we made extensive but implicit use of our internal proprietary framework around leadership team effectiveness. The phase was a mix of process and content work where the team not only focused on certain tasks at hand but also on how they approached the task and manifestation of inter-personal relationships.

Though having established the primary level of comfort between the team members, we noticed that back at work, there were still areas which needed to be addressed, such as, ability to confront each other respectfully whilst appreciating what oneself and the other brought to the table. Central to grappling with this challenge was the need to change one's own mental models around leadership and teams. Hence, the first touch point was a three-day group process workshop built on the edifice of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Using AI as the starting point, the team engaged in powerful and meaningful conversations pertaining to their own strengths, that of the team, the dreams they had for the team, and the expectations they had of the leader. At the same time, the inherent struggles and the inter-personal conflicts that came in the way of the full effectiveness of the team surfaced and were acknowledged, if not resolved. Another element of this sub-phase was the assimilation of the leader and the team articulat-

ing their needs, and expectations from the leader. This gave an in-depth understanding of the leader's style and also helped set expectations. The hallmark of this phase was to work on relationships with each other and the leader rather than the task.

The second touch-point started with the team coming together to review and reflect on the task the team had undertaken for itself. In the meantime, the team and the leader had worked on articulating a vision for themselves and exploring its identity. The team set about defining its vision as part of their regular work. The remarkable feature of this process was that the team did this task on its own without dependence on any external expert. Furthermore, the task was initiated and carried forward by the leader

in an inclusive and consultative manner with the rest of the team members. The team then assembled during the second touch point to reflect on the experience of the task and how they had carried it out. Not only did it reflect on the content of the task, they also utilized the space to reflect on how the vision resonates with the team members at a personal level. What was remarkable about this stage was how individuals and the team had progressed on their leadership journey –

wherein they were creating experiences for becoming more effective and also providing support and nurturance to each other in the process.

The third touch point came in the form of a workshop around organizational values. Having worked on the vision, the leader and the team set about the task of operationalizing the values of the organization to themselves and their teams. The outcomes of the second and third touch-points were a clear vision towards the direction in which the business would go and the values that were fundamental across the organization in pursuing the vision. In other words, the 'what' and the 'how' of the organization's future was clearly articulated and operationalized.

The work which the individual leaders, the team, and the support system did in the intervening period between the phases and the different touch-points, and the elaboration of a significant component of the support system including – individual formal and informal coaching to

While it is fashionable to 'measure' outcomes for almost everything in terms of return on investment, we have consciously steered clear of that temptation.

leadership – are beyond the scope of this paper. We believe, it suffices to say, that individual coaching for the leader and the members of the team received sufficient attention.

Figure 1 represents the leadership development path for leaders.

Outcomes

While it is fashionable to ‘measure’ outcomes for almost everything in terms of return on investment, we have consciously steered clear of that temptation. The three-fold expectations we had at the start of the journey were to enhance the individual leaders’ effectiveness by providing a space to gain insight and experiment with new behaviours; to enhance team effectiveness by assimilating the leader and the team, by helping them articulate norms and build capabilities in them to reflect on the task and process issues that they were facing and are likely to face in future; and to create a self-sustaining and a self-reliant support system that helps the leader and the team to anticipate and cope with opportunities/challenges they may encounter. On these counts, we are convinced that we have seen reasonable success so as to carry the work further and replicate it in the future while incorporating our learning from the process.

Building Blocks

Here we articulate some of the building blocks that were fundamental to the work we did. It would be only fair to mention that, this is not an exhaustive list:

- Focusing on the strengths of the individuals and the team rather than exclusively be pre-occupied with weaknesses.
- Creating capabilities in individuals and the team to carry their own work beyond a point and not create dependencies on ‘experts’.
- An action research orientation where diagnosing and intervention happened iteratively. Learning from earlier interventions and the impact it had created fed into the design of the next intervention.
- The series of interventions were both sequential and concurrent.
- Leveraging internal frameworks and external expertise to get the best out of both.
- Individuals and the teams have a hierarchy of needs and it needs to be filtered into the development plan.
- Using self as an instrument of change on the one hand being constantly vigilant of our own needs and biases and not let these ‘taint’ our work, while on the other hand recognizing that we are as much an integral part of the team as anybody else and hence effectively leveraging the ‘self’ to help the team.
- A strong commitment to foster ‘helping relationships.’

Key Learnings/Conclusions

- In the leadership journey, the individual and collective paths are inextricably inter-twined and the best results can be achieved when one is leveraged for the other.
- The success of the team and the leader are inter-related and one cannot take place at the expense of the

Figure 1: The Development Path in a Nutshell

Phase	Component	Methodology	Outcome
Phase 1	Leading Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proprietary psychometric instrument & coaching • Coaching engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self awareness • Self acceptance • Being secure with oneself
Phase 2	Leading with Others	1st sub-phase: Effective one-on-one interactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching skills 2nd sub-phase: Effective interaction in teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st touch-point: Strength-based leadership workshop • 2nd touch-point: Internal leadership team effectiveness framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding others’ strengths and styles • Accepting others • Appreciating complementary strengths • Feeling secure with others • Understanding team dynamics • Understanding functional & dysfunctional team behaviours • Build relationships
Phase 3	Leading Change Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative Inquiry (AI) lab • Vision lab • Values lab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper understanding of team performance dynamics • Review mental models • Set agenda for LT effectiveness to master change in self, others and organization

other. In fact, in the case of a leadership team, the members have to be constantly reminded of and have to remain conscious of the role they play in contributing to the success of the leader and the team which in turn significantly contributes to their individual success.

- The journey itself is the constant; it is interspersed with key milestones or events. At no point of time does the work stop. In fact, the ability to create an environment back at work to continue to experiment with the insights during the events is a critical ingredient.
- Each phase saw unfreezing, movement, and re-freezing of certain critical individual and team behaviours.

In other words, the processes are best kept iterative and incremental so as to allow the participants to see and experience the progress they are making and at the same time bite what they can chew.

- Without ignoring the multiple models that are relevant and reliable, we kept them at the background without being overly obsessed. The broad framework we had in mind was the stages in the life cycle of the team and the leader centring on the hierarchy of needs of the individuals and the team. Though Maslow's³² hierarchy of needs – and its later-day variation offered by Alderfer³³ — is not without its critics, we implicitly relied on this model and adapted it while designing the sequence of interventions. In other words, the hierarchy of needs were categorized into existence needs, relatedness needs, and growth needs. We were conscious of the co-existence of the needs of the individuals and the team. We made it the basis for designing several interventions and for encouraging the leaders to take this sensitivity back to their contexts. We began with the knowledge that the team has its own identity – which it develops over a period of time. We also began with the belief that the team has its own unique needs – different from the needs of its members.

The success of the team and the leader are inter-related and one cannot take place at the expense of the other. In fact, in the case of a leadership team, the members have to be constantly reminded of and have to remain conscious of the role they play in contributing to the success of the leader and the team which in turn significantly contributes to their individual success.

- At this juncture, we are keen to pause and acknowledge – and succumb to the temptation of inadvertently proposing a theory of team development. We would be quick to add that this exercise in theory-building is based on just a few experiences as observed by us in the course of the work we have done and may or may not be backed by earlier studies. As the team came together, the safety/existence needs of the members were predominant whilst the team's identity was still developing and hence its needs were still premature though not completely non-existent. Hence, the first phase of our work was focused on satisfying the

existence needs of the individuals. They needed to be secure in themselves and in the presence of others. However, the group was likely to grapple with basic physiological needs in the form of appropriate physical space, time, presence of members, skilled facilitators, etc. By the time we reached the second phase, the focus had shifted to the belongingness/relatedness needs of the individuals whilst the team needs were entering the realm of existence needs – the team wanted to survive and have an existence of its own. This phase was characterized by the individuals' needs to belong to each other which in turn contributed to the formation of a meta-identity that took the shape and name of a 'team'. The team had to grapple with its own safety needs and a parallel process of satisfying this need and the desire to exist commenced. From the team's per-

spective, this was a phase where the unconscious force within tried to insulate itself from any external threat and became sensitive to issues regarding its identity. The third phase focused on the esteem/growth needs of the individuals and at the same time the relatedness/belongingness needs of the team. In other words, in this phase, individuals start demonstrating the need to contribute to the task of the group and thereby make their place in the team's hierarchy. This inevitably ushers in conflicts since each member tries to satisfy one's own esteem needs. However, at this crucial stage, an effective team responds by attending to its belongingness/relatedness needs thereby curb-

³² Maslow, A H (1954). *Motivation and Personality*, New York: Harper.

³³ Alderfer, C P (1972). *Existence, Relatedness, and Growth: Human Needs in Organizational Settings*, New York: Free Press.

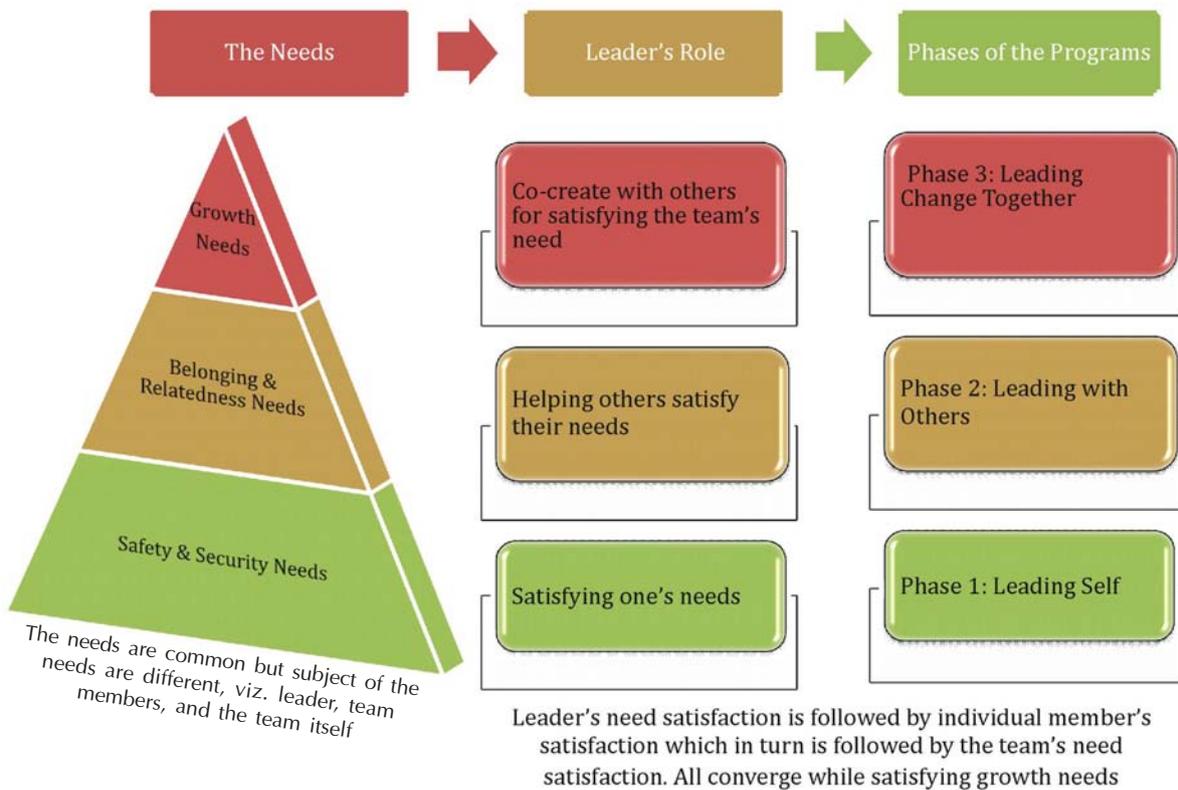
ing the fissiparous tendencies that individual esteem needs may fuel. Undoubtedly, the team's collective unconscious realizes that its sheer existence could be jeopardized if these divisive tendencies are not battled. As the third phase progressed, the belonging needs and the esteem needs of the individuals and the team took centre-stage especially during the first touch point. The second and third touch points represented the stage of the growth needs of the individuals and the team integrating with each other and also leading them towards the path of self-actualization. This is the stage when the realization occurs that there are interdependencies between individual success, the team's success, and the larger organization's success (see Figure 2).

- The sequence of satisfaction of the needs for the leader, for the members of the team, and the overall team are different. At the same time, we have observed that it is likely to follow a hierarchical order. We hypothesize

that the need-satisfaction of the leader of the team should be one step ahead of the need-satisfaction of the individual members – at least during the first two stages. In other words, the leader has to satisfy his/her safety needs before leading the members of the team to satisfy their safety needs. Further, the leader has to satisfy his/her relatedness needs before creating the space for team members to satisfy their belongingness needs. Beyond this, we reckon that the growth needs of the leader and the team members could overlap and need not necessarily follow the earlier sequence. Similarly, the team's need-satisfaction follows the need-satisfaction of the individual members and merges at the top with growth needs. In other words, the security needs of the leader, individual members, and the team are satisfied in that hierarchy. And this hierarchy is juxtaposed, with the hierarchy of the needs itself.

- In this case, success can primarily be attributed to the

Figure 2: A Model of Leadership Development



Note 2: It is pertinent to mention that, the frontline managers and their managers also were exposed to parts of the interventions described here. This was done to ensure that there was a system-wide intervention with some common elements for all and some specific solutions exclusive to particular segments of the management team. For example, in one business, all managers, their managers, and the leadership team were covered under Phase 1 of the work. Later, the managers of managers and the leadership team were all covered under Phase 2 of the work.

leaders' commitment and investment. The commitment which the individual leaders and the leadership team showed towards making each other successful was the hallmark of this journey. It had its own anxious moments, but the faith and trust with which the participants took risks were open to learning and was a unique experience in itself. Equally important was the partnership between the HR leader, the internal consultant, and the external consultant. The iterative process of reality-testing, sharing of information, and

closure of feedback loops at every stage was a remarkable feature. The realization dawned upon us quite early that, as internal change-agents, our primary role lay not just in designing the interventions and inviting external partners to carry out their work but to invest significantly in setting them up for success by constantly feeding the external consultant with insights and data points pertaining to the system that ensures that neither the consultant nor the client are strangers to each other when they start work. 

Developing a Global Leader from India: Views of a Coach/Consultant in Developing Leadership Talent

An Interview with Prasad Kaipa

By
Twisha Anand

A thoughtful integration of perspectives, principles, and practices of business, science and technology, and spirituality is what makes Dr. Kaipa's leadership development programmes unique. Sharing his insights on leadership development, Dr. Kaipa distinguishes between two leadership strategies – being a “cool cat” or being a “smart fox.” Citing metaphors from an old fable, he compares a “cool cat” that knows just one way of saving itself from the hunters and a “smart fox,” which knows many different ways to do so. While the cat is learning other techniques from the fox, some hunters appear. The cat hides itself on the tree, the only way it knows to save itself. The fox gets killed while deciding on the method to use to save itself. Dr. Kaipa mentions that many of us act either as cool cats or smart foxes as per our natural instinct and that both kinds of behaviours may be necessary at different times. Functional leaders are like cool cats- they know how to manage and get things done. They manage cost, quality, delivery, customer satisfaction, and are excellent in managing projects and bringing them to successful

Functional leaders are like cool cats – they know how to manage and get things done. They manage cost, quality, delivery, customer satisfaction, and are excellent in managing projects and bringing them to successful and profitable conclusion. They can execute and deliver quarter after quarter.

and profitable conclusion. They can execute and deliver quarter after quarter. Smart fox brand of leaders are generally out-of-the-box thinkers, innovators, and entrepreneurs. They build the brand, differentiate their company from everybody else, but they may not add anything unique to the execution process. They in their role as leaders are happy to be visionaries and big picture thinkers and strategists and proud of their contribution. According to Dr. Kaipa, smart fox is one extreme and cool cat is the other extreme form of leadership and without each other's help, they don't make their best contribution to the organization. He suggests that, to be a better leader, we should take the approach of a wise owl as it integrates both kinds of leadership. Wise owls are not stuck with one way of leading and are able to move freely between the two styles and bring upon what is needed to get the job done — whether it is the execution focus or the top line growth. They are flexible, resilient, and have the ability to work with and do what is needed for the organization concerned. The focus of leadership development in the future should be on developing wise

owls because they are the people who can deal with complexity, diversity, speed and scarcity more meaningfully than smart foxes or cool cats.

Shift in Leadership Focus

According to Dr. Kaipa, the leadership concept has changed significantly over the past twenty years. Total quality leadership, total quality management, and re-engineering have come and gone and in the recent times innovative leadership is becoming more essential for organizations to grow. When the top line growth happens through not only mergers and acquisitions, but also through organic innovation, the organization benefits in the long run. Dr. Kaipa gives the example of Nano contributing to Tata Motors' top line growth through innovation, and Jaguar and Land Rover increasing top line growth through mergers and acquisitions. Over time, knowledge transfer can happen between various divisions of Tata Motors but the success of Nano and innovations in R&D that they have come up with will become the foundation for many new "products" that they could sell around the world.

Insights from Programmes in India

Having conducted close to 80 programmes in India since 1990 in about 30+ companies, Dr. Kaipa narrates the challenges in developing Indian leaders. He feels that leaders in India are different in mindset and skill set and need to be developed in unique ways compared to those in the Western countries. Indian leaders seem to believe that their teachers and coaches must have more domain knowledge and should demonstrate their expertise about the subject. Gaining knowledge and having intellectual prowess is very important for leaders in India; as they are themselves intellectual and well informed, they are not easily convinced and need the facilitator to prove that they are "gurus" and worth listening to. Indian leaders believe that they gain credibility in their teams by being knowledgeable and the focus is not on group discussions, learning from each other as much as it is on listening to the "expert". Dr. Kaipa differentiates this experience from

that in the United States and (West in general) where leaders and managers attending the leadership development programmes are not so concerned about how much the trainer/coach "knows" but are focused on what they can take away to apply in terms of tools, processes, and models. Another differentiating factor is that the Western audience is well grounded in structures and processes and more interested in ideas that could be applied in their organization whereas Indian leaders are idea-rich but need structures, processes, and frameworks to think with. In other words, the Western world is good at execution and Indian leaders are good at vision and plans. Dr. Kaipa believes that Indian leaders are good at translating their visions into action and if a suitable structure, process,

To be a better leader, we should take the approach of a wise owl as it integrates both kinds of leadership. Wise owls are not stuck with one way of leading and are able to move freely between the two styles and bring upon what is needed to get the job done — whether it is the execution focus or the top line growth.

and motivation is provided, they deliver impressive results. They are also quick learners and can translate best practices to suit their organizational context and invest the rest. Dr. Kaipa believes that the majority of Indian leaders have high intellectual capacity but they might not be exposed to different execution frameworks and once they are, they not just copy but innovate and come up with 'jugaad' solutions if necessary to meet organizational needs. Dr. Kaipa addresses this challenge of knowledge-skill gap by getting leaders to first identify where they have the biggest gaps and helping them to bridge those and then move on to learn what they need to learn to become more successful. He also starts with building psychological capital by

focusing on unleashing their capacity and genius rather than fixing problems.

Dr. Kaipa feels that, sometimes, Indian leaders are very good at adopting best practices from outside and do not pay sufficient attention to homegrown approaches and solutions. As they try to compete with the Western companies, they implement ideas and best practices from everywhere in their organization. Indian leaders often forget that each organization has its unique DNA and some practices are not easily translatable. The force-fitting of ideas into their own context slows them down and sometimes gets them into trouble because whatever is done superficially might look very good but may not make them

competitive in the global market. Dr. Kaipa's programmes thus focus on contextually helping leaders to think through the implementation in their specific organization and not just look for good ideas and processes. In India, he feels that he has to work doubly hard to make the leaders receptive or else they just listen politely but do not spend their valuable time to come up with unique solutions that stand the test of competitive global market place. He believes that it is critical in leadership development programmes offered to Indians, we take time to customize the pedagogy to get participants to recognize the opportunity to not just become successful Indian leaders but to become successful *global* leaders.

Innovations in Pedagogy to Suit the Indian Audience

Perhaps the best-known evaluation methodology for training programmes is developed by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1959 (and updated in 1994).

The four-levels of evaluation consist of (Kirkpatrick, 1994):

- Reaction - how the learners react to the learning process
- Learning - the extent to which the learners gain knowledge and skills
- Behaviour - capability to perform the learned skills while on the job
- Results - includes such items as monetary, efficiency, moral, etc.

Majority of the leadership development programmes use smile sheets which are collected at the end of the programme that primarily measure how participants reacted to the learning process and rarely addresses what they learned, how they plan to apply, and what results they intend to produce. Hence the value of the programmes drops significantly once the participant leaves. Dr. Kaipa designs his programmes focusing on participant learning, desired performance, and anticipated results. He believes in customizing the programmes to steer the participants towards application and outcome focus while they are enjoying the learning process and developing self-awareness (by identifying where they are and where they would like to be). He believes that a successful leadership develop-

ment programme has to simultaneously focus on perspectives, principles, and practices. If their mindset (perspective) is changed, they pick up principles that are meaningful to them and come up with practices similar to best practices that they had heard about during the programme.

Dr. Kaipa's programmes rest on the unique concept of 'igniting the genius within' which involves helping participants to change the perspective or the world-view in addition to learning principles and practices. The concept fits in with the positive psychology approach that

Dr. Kaipa works with and when participants develop self-confidence and connects what they are learning with what they already know and believe in, their self-efficacy goes up and their application of learning becomes intrinsically motivated. Once they have a vision that is clear in their mind and they are intentional about making that vision come alive, they become passionate and take action consistent with their vision. This concept of connecting vision, passion, and action is closely related to the spiritual concept, '*trikarana suddhi*,' where we talk about aligning the body, mind, and spirit. Once they align their actions with passion and vision, self-imposed limitations do not get in the way and their genius is not just ignited but implemented appropriately to produce desired results. As an example, he narrates the story of the Olympic athlete Marilyn King, placed Second in the

The Western audience is well grounded in structures and processes and more interested in ideas that could be applied in their organization whereas Indian leaders are idea-rich but need structures, processes, and frameworks to think with. In other words, the Western world is good at execution and Indian leaders are good at vision and plans.

1980 Olympics trials. About eight months before the Olympics, a truck had hit her from behind and she had a disc bulge and dislocation; she was thus unable to practice for the next several months. She got all the videos of her competitors from various countries, and watched what they did. She kept imagining her pentathlon run and visualized her practice in painstaking detail. By the time she got sufficiently healed to be able to participate in the track, there were only two months left for actual practice. Two months later, she was ranked Second in the Olympic trials. Her detailed vision and passion to keep recreating her run mentally in exquisite detail and all the

actions she took consistent to her vision allowed her to succeed when many others failed. She calls her approach the 'Olympic Way' and trains people in this approach in California.

Dr. Kaipa designs his leadership development programmes to have all the three elements – action orientation, pedagogy that creates meaning and passion, and finally, the commitment to help participants leave with a clearer focus and vision of what they want to achieve as leaders. He says that it is deeply connected with spiritual principles practised in India. It is said in Hindu mythology that one has to master three kinds of powers to truly become successful in the world" *Ichha Shakti* (power of intention), *Jnana Shakti* (power of knowledge/perspective), and *Kriya Shakti* (power of actualization through action). Igniting the genius within means awakening and aligning these three powers in participants. Dr. Kaipa uses relevant segments of movies, tools from brain research and cognitive psychology, stories from all over, principles and best practices from the management world in his programmes to inform, inspire, and engage the participants.

Dr. Kaipa explains that leadership development occurs through multiple approaches and while the programme approach is one that is most used, executive coaching is becoming the second most used approach. The pedagogy in programmes and coaching is significantly different though the end result is still helping them to align their vision, passion, and action and igniting the genius within them.

Executive Coaching vs Programme Approach for Leadership Development

In coaching, Dr. Kaipa works with one person at a time or a small group of people and focuses mostly on action and results rather than on knowledge and skills. He explains that coaching requires a lot of hand-holding, partnering, and is a lot more specific than programmes and also done in small doses over many sessions. He does not dictate the agenda, but week after week, he works with coachees on successfully addressing tactical, operational, and strategic issues and in doing so, he learns the underlying

principles, practices, and perspectives. While programmes take place in classrooms, coaching takes place in meeting rooms. In programmes, they discuss cases and best practices of industry leaders, while in coaching, they apply learnings from cases and best practices to problem on hand and see how they can come up with productive solution. Programmes produce results after the programmes are completed (sometimes long after), whereas coaching produces results during the process. In programmes, learning happens first and action takes place later whereas in coaching, the order is reversed.

While an executive coach is generally engaged to work with a specific leader, Dr. Kaipa feels that his approach works even better in a team coaching context.

Indian leaders often forget that each organization has its unique DNA and some practices are not easily translatable. The force-fitting of ideas into their own context slows them down and sometimes gets them into trouble.

Programmes focus on knowledge and skills of participants; executive coaching focuses on competence development in the context of leadership; consulting focuses on increasing effectiveness of the organization (not focused on individuals). In a consulting scenario, one helps the organization to become successful, innovative, and sustainable and in achieving those goals, leaders become more effective. In that respect, the focus is on results and leadership development is a secondary benefit as results get produced through people and their efforts (and innovation).

Future of Leadership in India

Dr. Kaipa believes that leadership is all about action. The effectiveness of leadership is measured by results achieved in the organization and the bench strength of leadership talent. Leaders have to see and seize opportunities before the competition, make choices on a continuous basis (especially in this complex and global reality), take responsibility and accountability for results and develop leaders around them. Dr. Kaipa mentions that if we can develop more leaders who can deliver on these four steps, then we will not be just exporting IT solutions but global leaders to other parts of the world. Dr. Kaipa feels that the world is ready and waiting for more leaders from India and hopes that Indian leaders are ready to step up to the plate and deliver. ✓

Consulting in “Leadership Development” — An Ethnographic View

Kartikeyan V, Shabari Madappa, Swasthika Ramamurthy and Vishwanath P

Introduction

Over the past decade, “leadership development” has become one of the hottest and most popular business conference topics. Most organizations today believe that this unknown, hard-to-pin-down development will mark the difference between success and failure in their businesses. Myriad books on the subject have been published in the hope of cashing in on what might prove to be the next magic wand. A Google search on “leadership” led us to 441 million hits! Consulting houses have launched global leadership practices and business schools have also partnered with organizations to sell their wares in the lucrative leadership education marketplace.

Every CEO today, irrespective of industry or country, has a well-rehearsed speech on how developing the next generation of leaders is the biggest challenge. And yet, with all the cacophony and a multitude of models, the struggle to define leadership development and a multi-dimensional approach to it persists. Most organizations to their dismay have discovered that eloquent statements and huge money investments do not necessarily equal a pipeline of quality leaders.

The reasons for such lack of clarity in the delivery of leadership development processes could rest in some flawed assumptions associated with most approaches towards developing leaders. Very often, the term “leadership development” is confused with “leader development” and the focus tends to be therefore on development of individuals and not the system. Another *cul de sac* that we find organizations walking into is a “one size fits all” or a “best practice” approach without appreciating the nu-

Acknowledgment. The authors wish to acknowledge the inspiring conversations with the Founders and Fellows of Sumedhas, Academy of Human Context, clients, workplace colleagues, co-workers, and many others who helped through the leadership journey.

ances of the cultural, country or industry context.

One of our key realizations is that it is more often the “practice of leadership development” that informs the theories of development rather than *vice versa*. This is the reason we have chosen to frame our own reference points on leadership based on an ethnographic experience rather than relying exclusively on a theoretical precept or a “lessons from history” approach.

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With over half a century of experience in the leadership development arena, questing for success and learning from mistakes, the VISTAS consulting team today approaches leadership development from a vastly different and wider lens than when we began. Our experience with organizations across industries, (with a cross-section of Indian companies and MNCs), as insiders and outsiders and having worked both “in the trenches” and in advisory executive coaching and facilitating capacities, has helped us assimilate our insights into a unique approach to leadership development that is constantly evolving. These insights frame and inform our practice, approach, and methods in this area and we wish to present some of these in this paper.

What Informs Our Consulting Practice

In all our leadership consulting work, we use certain models and frameworks. Apart from the inspiration we receive from Integral Psychology, particularly as written about by the renowned Ken Wilber (2000), we have chosen to construct models based on our real experience and then validate these through dialogues with scholars and other practitioners. While we have used these models and frameworks in diverse consulting settings, for the purpose of this paper, we are choosing to talk about them only in the context of leadership development (LD) engagements.

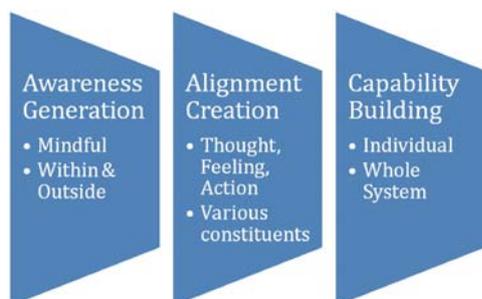
In this paper, we are choosing to present two of our core models, especially since they inform and impact our leadership work. These models are the AAC Model for designing transformative leadership development and the VISTAS™ model for leadership and organization development (this latter model is eponymous with our firm's name). These models in turn rest on the following paradigms/axioms:

- That a leader's role is to produce superior performance and also make meaning
- That a leader is a person and leadership is a social role
- Leadership is both universal and particular
- Leadership development would need to focus not just on the thinking- doing aspects but equally on the being-becoming aspects of one's self.

The AAC model of Awareness, Alignment, and Capability can be visualized as an *inside-out* vector, with the focus being on *working from within* a human system to effect transformation in the outside-in demands of Vision, Task, Realities, and Sentience, which is covered by the VISTAS™ model.

Transformative Leadership Development – The AAC Model

Many approaches to transformation or change in systems tend to focus right away on building capability to change or manage the consequences of change. While not arguing with these approaches, we believe that there are two essential steps that precede capability building in any human system, be it an individual leader, or a leadership collective such as a team. These are detailed and illustrated here.



Step 1: Generating Awareness

“Equanimity just looks on and observes, while calmly settled in composed neutrality, it is manifested as the quieting of both resentment and approval” – Gautam Buddha

This act, the first in the transformation process, implies casting a gaze – simultaneously inwards into the system and from there outwards to the objective context of the system-in-focus. Mindful awareness implies neither evaluation nor judgment but an impassive witnessing or contemplation of the whole system from various locations.

Such awareness enables the observer to gradually make out patterns that are not apparent in the normal course of things. This mindful awareness looks at everything in and about the system – the “what is,” the “desired,” the resistance, and the paths ahead. Vistas’ belief is that if awareness is absent, change would be ill-constructed and not lasting. Awareness, thus, is the foundation on which change happens.

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Step 2: Creating Alignment

Following awareness is alignment. Awareness makes apparent the fragments in the system that needs to be constellated meaningfully for the change to take place. In an individual leader, it could be alignment of

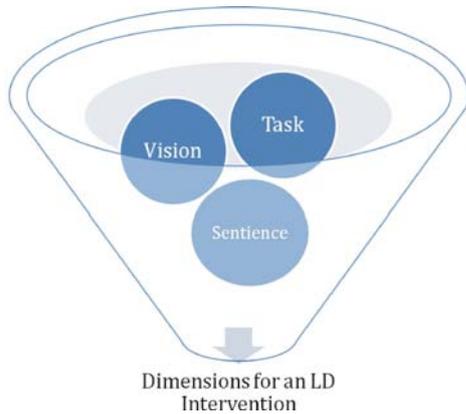
thought, feeling, and action. In a leadership team, it could imply alignment of the various constituent units or different individuals. Alignment enables the “coming together” of parts to generate meaning – much like the coming together of *swaras* (musical notes) to create the form of a raga.

Step 3: Building Capability

Awareness and alignment create the ground on which lasting capability can be built. Vistas’ vision of leadership development is different from several others’ in that most other approaches that we have experienced or researched tend to jump to building capability, while Vistas proposes capability building as the final step in the whole process. We advocate a moving away from a “training” orientation to LD and moving to an Organization Development (OD) orientation instead.

Necessary Ingredients and Dimensions of a Leadership Development Intervention

In each of the above inside-out vectors of leadership transformation, we believe that three outside-in ingredients/dimensions need to be considered to generate a wholesome leadership developmental experience. These three aspects are: Vision, Task, and Sentience.



Vision – This function of leadership refers to the leaders’ role in defining what their enterprise will look like in the foreseeable future.

Task – This function of leadership refers to the role of leaders in getting things done; by bringing in the required effort, marshalling resources, and working towards accountability for the whole system that surrounds the business outcomes. This aspect stands for the “objective” world of the collective.

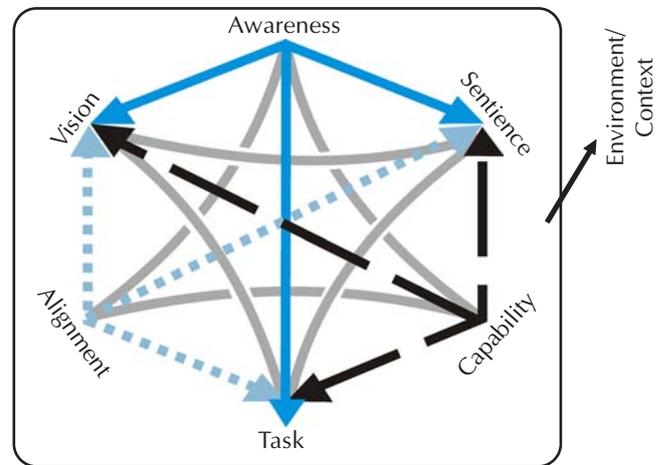
Sentience – This function of leadership is not much written about. But we have a bias towards this aspect, which refers to the subjective world that the leader has an accountability to foster in the system. It is the world of humanness, of feelings, of emotions, the “underbelly”, the “soft” side and often the “vulnerable” side of the system.

Thus bringing in the three vectors of inside-out transformation and the three outside-in demand dimensions, we can generate nine leadership development pathways as under:

- Generating awareness of vision
- Generating awareness of the task realities and demands
- Generating awareness of the sentient structures of the organization/business
- Creating alignment towards the vision

- Creating alignment in the task sphere
- Creating alignment within and between sentient structures in the organization/business
- Building visioning capability
- Building alignment capability
- Building sentience capability

These pathways can also be visually captured in an enneagrammic *yantra* as follows -



Legend –
— represents the Pathways of Awareness
- - - represents the Pathways of Alignment
- - - represents the Pathways of Capability

Some examples of development work that we have undertaken under these pathways are:

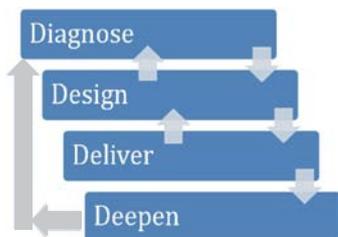
Workshop Description	Purpose
Vision Generation and Cascade Workshops	To generate awareness and facilitate alignment of vision
Goal Setting Workshops	To generate task awareness
Depth Diagnosis of Organizations/Teams	To generate awareness of sentient structures and patterns
Teaming Retreats	To facilitate task/role alignment, sentience capability
Leadership Skills Workshops	Capability building
Executive Coaching	Awareness and capability in all three transformation vectors
Immersive Experiences/ Action Learning	Awareness and capability in all three transformation vectors

VISTAS™ Model for Leadership and Organization Development

Architecture of Vistas’ LD Engagement

In architecting LD engagements, we have adopted a “4-D” approach, borrowing from our broad-spectrum Or-

organization Development (OD) work. The four Ds – Diagnose, Design, Deliver, and Deepen – are carefully chosen verbs that indicate a structured flow to any engagement.



Diagnose – This phase, always the first, is intended to assess and understand the human system-in-focus, be it an individual leader or a collection of leaders. This phase helps the consultants design a customized LD intervention for the client(s).

Design – Following the diagnose phase, the consultants consolidate inputs and partner with the client to design the most appropriate learning intervention.

Deliver – This phase refers to the actual deployment of the LD intervention. This has taken various shapes (and combinations of shapes), including leadership coaching, LD workshop sessions around various themes, team-level interventions with leadership teams with an intent to enhance both their real-time collective leadership capability and fostering culture.

Deepen – Often ignored by consultants and clients alike, this is a phase where we work with our clients to go beyond the initial delivery and help them institutionalize the learning. Typical ways in which this might take shape are process consultation, ongoing advisory, team coaching, review sessions, one-to-one coaching, and so on.

To reiterate, our practice of organization development informs our practice of leadership development.

Diagnosis

The tenets that govern our approach to diagnosis are the following:

- *Organizations are not static entities* — While diagnosis may be our entry point into a client system, we view *inquiry* as a more continuous process. During subsequent stages of Design-Delivery-Deepen, there is a need to stay alive to emerging data. This also needs to be incorporated into the leadership development intervention.

- *Seek both objective as well as subjective data* – Our methodology for diagnosis stays instrument neutral. We believe, a more evocative story of the organization emerges only from a consolidated view of both the qualitative and the quantitative. So, we review existing data that is with the client (e.g., internal surveys, metrics related to usage of people systems such as performance management, etc.); we may also choose to administer a survey for the leaders ourselves. Through intense one-on-one meetings, focus group discussions, we also gather the leaders’ perceptions, opinions, and views of current challenges. Put together, this informs us of not just the stated but also the unstated unexpressed needs of the leaders.
- *Diagnose through a multi-dimensional approach* – Our diagnosis meetings go beyond the participants of the leadership development intervention. They involve a sample of the leaders, key stakeholders they report/interact with, sponsors of the initiative, L&D team, etc., the objective being to unearth the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders.
- *Be alert to one’s own biases* – Our filters as a diagnostician determine what we choose to see and what we choose to ignore. We stay alive to this, and more importantly believe that this must be stated when we share the diagnosis back with the client.
- *Alert the client that the leadership intervention has already begun* – Diagnostic meetings herald and raise expectations across the whole system; it is very difficult to retract a leadership intervention once diagnosis is completed.

While working with the HR function for a financial services firm, we first met with all members of the HR leadership team individually, the Country Head of the organization, and other key business stakeholders. This was then followed by focus group discussions with all members of the team. This phase revealed significantly more than what had been first articulated by the person who had invited us to work with them. For example, the leadership team’s perception of themselves was divergent to that held by the rest of the function about them as leaders. A decision was thus taken, to use the results of the diagnosis as the core of the workshop (during the delivery phase) seeding all subsequent work in the leadership intervention. Example —

We see the diagnosis phase as a critical first step to building an enhanced awareness of the challenge, helping move participants from *a* viewpoint to a consolidated

objective and subjective view of *multiple* viewpoints in the client system.

Design

A core change that we are witnessing in our approach to leadership development is, how we are increasingly involving the client and emphasizing co-creation of the design of the intervention. We see this partnership helping both of us in multiple ways:

- *Increases joint ownership for the success of the intervention* – which in reality does not and cannot rest with only one party, i.e., either the consultant or the client.
- *Acknowledges each one's blind spots as the pragmatics of the leadership workshop are determined* – as an example, the internal anchors' own presumptions and those of the consultant of what will work and what will not, need to be brought to the fore and confronted.
- *Builds trust between the consultant and the client*, helps both understand each other and respect each one's approach.
- *Enables the internal anchor in the organization to build capability* for a continuity of approach to the intervention even after the delivery phase is completed.

In our design phase, we ask ourselves two core questions:

- What is the task outcome?
- What is the experiential outcome?

As an example, the stated task outcome may be – *a vision statement* clearly articulated by the participants or *goals/deliverables for the year ahead* to be identified for each function or *key leadership skills* to be transferred. The experiential outcome could possibly be a *sense of inclusion* in building this vision statement or an *increased sense of optimism* of reaching the goals or a *belief in the need and practicality* of applying those leadership skills at work. While much of both (the task and experiential outcomes) is identified in the design stage, much of it emerges through the delivery stage when we work directly with participants.

In one of our engagements, the country leadership team for a large manufacturer of mobile handsets engaged us to facilitate

a leadership session – the group was a diverse team of 17 leaders from across geographies. While the task outcome was a need for a synthesis of capabilities, a need to recognize the synergies of working together, processes to leverage capabilities across geographies, the experiential outcome was for a sense of 'one leadership team' to emerge at the end of the two-day workshop. Both outcomes were incorporated in the design and the delivery phase. Example —

Deliver

In this phase, the consultant engages with the participants much more directly and visibly. We believe that the success of this phase depends on three perspectives:

- *The consultant/s' own wisdom and wealth of experiences and how they can be brought to the fore* — The "WHO" of

A core change that we are witnessing in our approach to leadership development is, how are we increasingly involving the client and emphasizing co-creation of the design of the intervention. We see this partnership helping both of us.

the person largely determines what the participant experiences and then learns from much more than "WHAT" the consultant is saying. We see the deliver phase as a large blank canvas on which participants paint their own unique perspective, questions, and responses. The consultant helps to stitch these together to create new perspectives for the developing leaders.

- *Intent vs. Content* - "Many roads lead to Rome" is a belief that we live by. While we are conscious of the outcomes desired by the client, we use our experience and wisdom to determine which methodology / instrument / technique seems most appropriate to

get there. In other words, the spirit of the framework or outcome is the key, irrespective of the methodology used. As an example, if deeper self-awareness as a leader or better inter-personal skills with the team is the clients' expectation from the intervention, the instrument/methodology we may choose to use will be determined by our perspective of what is most appropriate in that context and would suit participant needs.

- *The group is the client* - In the previous phases of diagnosis and design, the consultant interfaces mainly with the client system and works in collaboration with the internal anchor to define the leadership intervention/s. In a delivery setting, the consultant's focus is the group in front of him/her and it is important to

stay alive to the group members' responses and feedback.

Client Experience - During one of our early leadership assignments, we focused intensely on the business leader's personal agenda in the delivery setting. This led us to unconsciously ignore what the group's emerging needs were, which at times were distinctly different from the leaders own personal agenda. Deep resistance within the group was visible, as they struggled to accept our inputs.

In another instance, during the lunch break at the workshop, the head of the leadership team we were working with wanted us to change direction in the post-lunch session. His motive was to make sure that his own agenda was clearly articulated and achieved; so he made suggestions of what he believed should be done. He even recommended the sort of discussions he wished us to encourage and which should be discouraged. This was difficult as our own sensing of the group's need was very different and the leadership learning outcomes would have been compromised. Staying true to the group's needs helped us to direct the conversation with the Head of the function and get his support to work with the group to achieve greater synergy and alignment. Example —

Deepen

Many organizations lament that they do not see an adequate return on investment after spending millions of dollars in leadership development. We believe that stand-alone leadership interventions do not guarantee sustained learning and application on the job. What is critical to make learning come alive and meaningful in the workplace is to design ways to sustain learning.

If the 'Deliver' phase is successful, many seeds in terms of thoughts, perspectives, skills, and deeper awareness are sown. Participants may take tentative steps to change the way they lead during the Deliver phase. But there is also an accompanying vulnerability as participants take their first steps to apply the new insights and make changes in their work context.

The 'Deepen' phase helps to create a climate in the work-setting that can nurture and foster participants as they

apply this new awareness in the work context.

Each organization can be creative about ways to help leaders deepen their learning thus creating a culture of continuous learning within.

"Every workshop ends with some cross-functional teams: participants enthusiastically take up one of the challenges to work with, but this is always difficult to implement once we return to the workplace. This time I've seen a difference – if we had stopped with just the workshops for the leaders, I am not sure if these teams would have progressed as much. It would have been work as usual." - Quote by the HR Head of a large software services firm during the deepen stage of the leadership intervention.

Dilemmas/Challenges

As the world and our contexts change rapidly, we continue to be faced with different sets of dilemmas and challenges that spur us to refine and re-define our own deeply held assumptions and "theories-in-use."

One clear contextual change has been the use of technology and "viruality" as a platform for development. The challenge is optimize their use without diluting the effectiveness of the process.

Another live dilemma that we constantly confront is the "components" vs "system" approach. Across the world, be it in technology or products, there is a clear trend towards a "modular" approach, which views self-sufficient modules that can use a plug-and-play methodology with other modules. We sometimes worry (with merit, we believe!) that this may not be the optimal approach to human systems – leadership development is not a module that can be plugged into a system – the intended and unintended consequences on the ecosystem must be examined and dealt with in more depth. As we mentioned in our approach, "alignment" of all parts of the eco system is essential to sustainable development.

A continuing challenge is also the pressure on "telescoping" and on the other hand, "amplification" of the "fad-of-the-day." Client demands today centre around

Stand-alone leadership interventions do not guarantee sustained learning and application on the job. What is critical to make learning come alive and meaningful in the workplace is to design ways to sustain learning.

condensing development times and sometimes around the use of the “edge” concepts or fads. Balancing the pressures with what is realistic will continue to be a struggle.

One of the areas that informs our practice is the ability to create “mindful awareness.” An important area for consideration here centres on the readiness of the client system in terms of what can be brought to its conscious awareness – too much and “drowning or rejection” can be a consequence – too little and the intervention can become superficial and shallow.

As most practitioners would appreciate, every phase of progress and evolution throws up its own challenges and dilemmas and perhaps the answers lie not in solving and resolving these dilemmas but in preparing to answer them and maybe sometimes transcend them.

Conclusion

As we hurtle towards a more uncertain and fast-paced future with a new generation of Millennials taking on the

leadership roles, our approach will need to continue evolving to assimilate and adopt edge practices, ideas, and the contextual needs.

In the ultimate analysis, the leadership development journey at both personal and organizational levels, is not a linear transit but an ever evolving spiral. As fellow practitioners, perhaps our only role in the journey is as fellow wayfarers who can help them pack what they need for their journey ahead and wish them Godspeed! 🙌

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