



NEWSLETTER

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Developing Leadership Qualities in Today's World: A holistic perspective

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The greatest challenge ahead is not a leadership challenge. It's a development challenge. The need for leadership development has never been more urgent. In today's world, Organizations realize that to survive in the present volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, they need leadership skills and organizational capabilities different from those that helped them succeed in the past. There is also a growing recognition that leadership development should not be restricted to the few who are in or close to the C-suite. With the proliferation of collaborative problem-solving platforms and digital "adhocracies" that emphasize individual initiative, employees across the board are increasingly expected to make consequential decisions that align with corporate strategy and culture. It's important, therefore, that they be equipped with the relevant technical, relational, managerial and communications skills.

I happened to attend a course on "High Impact Leadership" at Columbia Business School, New York recently. During the course, there were discussions on several topical issues like emotional intelligence, paradox management, organizational effectiveness, enlightened leadership, management of change, diversity management etc. During a sub-group discussion on the issue of Enlightened Leadership, the participants (31 participants from 15 countries) were asked to share about one of such leaders under whom they may have worked. I felt myself fortunate to have worked under one such enlightened leader and I could discuss the case of Delhi Metro as a successful project under the authentic and enlightened leadership of Dr. E. Sreedharan. The

participants as well as the faculty were quite surprised to know the success story of DMRC and the seminal role of its leader Dr. Sreedharan. In fact, most of the leadership qualities required for a high impact leader, could easily be found in Dr. E Sreedharan.

In the present context, the pertinent question is how to develop such leaders who can succeed in today's world. Year after year, organizations realize that they have to struggle to find and develop leaders for the future. In this year's Global Human Capital Trends' survey, 80 percent of respondents rated leadership a high priority for their organizations, but only 41 percent told us they think their organizations are ready to meet their leadership requirements. In this connection, A HBR study has found a profound gap between today's methods of developing leaders and the skills leaders needed in today's world.

The methods that organizations use to develop leaders have not changed much over the decades. The majority of managers are developed from on-the-job experiences, training and coaching/mentoring. "While these are all still important, leaders are no longer developing fast enough or in the right ways to match the new environment,"

New Research has laid stress on four distinct trends shaping leader development — trends that top management as well as training and development professionals must grapple with as they figure out ways to prepare for the future.

Vertical Development will matter more:

There are two different types of development: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal development focuses on new skills, abilities and behavior. It is technical learning and competency-based.

Horizontal development is most useful when a problem is clearly defined and we have known techniques for solving it. Vertical development, in contrast, refers to the mental and emotional “stages” that people progress through. At each higher level, adults “make sense” of the world in more complex and inclusive ways.

The methods for horizontal and vertical development are very different. Horizontal development can be “transmitted” from an expert, but vertical development must be earned by oneself. Horizontal development cannot be relied upon as the sole, or even primary, means for developing leaders.

People must own their development:

The current model encourages people to believe that someone else is responsible for their development — human resources, their manager or trainers. But people develop the quickest when they feel responsible for their own progress.

“We need to help people out of the passenger seat and into the driver’s seat of their own development”

Individual leaders are less important:

Leadership development has come to a point of being too individually focused and elitist. There is a transition occurring from the old paradigm in which leadership resided in a person or role, to a new one in which leadership is a collective process that is spread throughout networks of people. Leadership development should focus more on what is needed in the system and how we can produce it.

The question will change from, “Who are the leaders?” to “What conditions do we need for leadership to flourish in the network? How do we spread leadership capacity throughout the organization and democratize leadership?”

We need a new era of innovation:

There are no simple, existing models or programs, which will be sufficient to develop the levels of collective leadership required to meet an increasingly complex future. Instead, an era of rapid innovation will be needed in which organizations experiment with new approaches that combine diverse ideas in new ways and share these with others. Technology and the Web will both provide the infrastructure and drive the change. Organizations that embrace the changes

will do better than those that resist it.

Truly speaking, most executive education programs—designed as extensions of or substitutes for MBA programs—focus on discipline-based skill sets, such as strategy development and financial analysis, and seriously underplay important relational, communication, and affective skills. Executive education programs also fall short of their own stated objective. “Lifelong learning” has been a buzzword in corporate and university circles for decades, but it is still far from a reality. Traditional executive education is simply too episodic, exclusive, and expensive to achieve that goal. Not surprisingly, top business schools have seen demand increase significantly for customized, cohort-based programs that address companies’ idiosyncratic talent-development needs. Corporate universities and the personal learning cloud—the growing mix of online courses, social and interactive platforms, and learning tools from both traditional institutions and upstarts—are filling the gap.

There are three main reasons for the disjointed state of leadership development. The first is a gap in motivation. Organizations invest in executive development for their own long-term good, but individuals participate in order to enhance their skills and advance their careers, and they don’t necessarily remain with the employers who’ve paid for their training. The second is the gap between the skills that executive development programs build and those that firms require—particularly the interpersonal skills essential to thriving in today’s flat, networked, increasingly collaborative organizations. Traditional providers bring deep expertise in teaching cognitive skills and measuring their development, but they are far less experienced in teaching people how to communicate and work with one another effectively. The third reason is the skills transfer gap. Simply put, few executives seem to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it to their jobs—and the farther the locus of learning is removed from the locus of application, the larger become this gap. Organizations must bridge these gaps in order to develop essential leadership and managerial talent. Setting a new context, identifying new leadership competencies, and putting the right culture in place are all vital parts of an effective leadership strategy. The final step is to find and develop the individuals who will serve as the leaders themselves. But where can organizations find them?

Today, the idea that organizations can simply go out

and “hire” new leaders is being called into question. Rather than searching to find and hire great leaders from outside who may or may not succeed in the organization’s corporate culture, most organizations would do well to explore new approaches and to invest more in developing the potential leaders that they possess. In today’s fast-paced environment, people learn by doing—and trying. To cultivate needed leadership competencies, organizations can give people more diverse, developmental assignments; promote people into leadership roles both earlier and later in their careers; give leaders with less traditional experience, the opportunity to run businesses and initiatives; and honor the ability of their workers and leaders at every level, from early to late in their careers, to rethink, challenge, and develop the business they’re in.

Many organizations continue to struggle to put leaders in place with the experience, capabilities, and motivation to take on both old and new business challenges. They should, therefore, take a fresh look at the context in which leaders need to operate today, as it offers the key to cultivating the leaders of tomorrow.

Also, one of the biggest complaints we hear about executive education is that the skills and capabilities developed don’t get applied on the job. This challenges the very foundation of executive education, but it is not surprising. Research by cognitive, educational, and applied psychologists dating back a century, along with more-recent work in the neuroscience of learning, reveals that the distance between where a skill is learned (the locus of acquisition) and where it is applied (the locus of application) greatly influences the probability that a student will put that skill into practice.

Indeed, it’s much easier to use a new skill if the locus of acquisition is similar to the locus of application. This is called near transfer. For instance, learning to map the aluminum industry as a value-linked activity chain transfers more easily to an analysis of the steel business (near transfer) than to an analysis of the semiconductor industry (far transfer) or the strategy consulting industry (farther transfer).

To be sure, when we say “distance,” we’re not referring just to physical range. New skills are less likely to be applied not only when the locus of application is far from the locus of acquisition

in time and space (as when learning in an MBA classroom and applying the skills years later on the job) but also when the social (Who else is involved?) and functional (What are we using the skill for?) contexts differ.

Leadership development must start early. Management should assess each individual’s development needs at least 10 or 15 years before the person is expected to reach his or her full potential. The emphasis should be on how people should best use their time: How can their skills be leveraged in new ways? Who needs to know these people? Who should be working with them, coaching and mentoring them? What experiences would be the most advantageous to them?

One of the most important parts of Leadership Development is connecting to Values. Shortcomings of many leadership development and leader development efforts in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors could be attributed to the failure to inculcate values in the developmental process. Much emphasis is placed on the skills and competencies sought. Insufficient attention is paid to values – both individual and organizational – which influence the leader. There are individual values that are embedded and should be recognized and identified as they will consciously or unconsciously impact mental models and decisions. By the same token, organizational values should be explored in order to clarify and strengthen them. In both situations - individual and organizational ethical standards - leadership and leader development can be greatly enhanced by focusing on values.

Values in Leadership need to identify a clear organizational context. Contextual factors moderate the leader’s identity, future development, and effectiveness. The context of the organization includes its norms, culture, climate, and accepted leadership styles. The organization’s context also includes its explicit and implicit values. There are clearly stated values which may or may not be consistent with the values that exist on the subterranean level. It is often the implicit values that are the most powerful in guiding behavior in the organization. Both must be clearly identified to gain a true understanding of organizational context. The surfacing of organizational values allows for those in the leadership development process to explore alignment between their own values and those of the organization. This can be a moment of truth. As evinced in the case of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, the leader Dr E Sreedharan inculcated Organizational Values so assiduously in the workforce since inception itself which enabled the organization to become a shining example of All round Excellence with Values.

Value Inculcation creates a climate where individuals can discover their potential. Creating this type of organization calls for a cascade of positive interactions between leaders and followers. It is this interaction that creates a positive culture and climate. This was implemented in letter and spirit in DMRC, when the Managing Director used to interact on a fixed time on every Monday with all Heads of departments and focus was shared across. Similarly, MD also used to interact with all new trainees / inductees irrespective of their ranks in Training Centre of DMRC, to drive home the importance of organization's vision, mission and values. This practice is an inward exploration which occurs while shaping leaders. It becomes more action- oriented when developing leadership. It provides a context for assessing and recalibrating while leading. In both cases, reflective practice is essential.

So, to conclude, Leader development and Leadership Development are enhanced by focusing on values. This important exploration enables clarity and authenticity to emerge in developmentally ready leaders. Just as leaders must be developmentally ready, so too must the organizations in which they will function. Organizational values must be made clear before beginning the work to design developmental interventions. The facets of developmental readiness include individual readiness as evidenced through self-awareness, self-concept clarity, and an inclination towards learning. Organizational readiness is often found in cultures that focus on strengths. It is also evident when organizations have identified key elements of their climate and culture. Just as individuals must have clear self-concepts, so must organizations. Identifying new leaders is something that all current leaders should be responsible for—and that policy is most effective if it starts at the top. CEOs and CMDs need to spend time focusing on this issue, assessing people's leadership strengths and analyzing current and future organizational requirements.

ROLE MODEL 1

This Indian man planted a tree every day for 35 years. The result is unbelievable

Deforestation is not an alien concept to us.



We all have grown up learning about it and witnessing it before our eyes, as more and more buildings replace trees and we rarely do anything about it.

But, there is one man who is changing this, by single-handedly doing something which may be unimaginable but not unachievable.

Padma Shri awardee, Jadav "Molai" Payeng, single-handedly planted an entire forest in Majuli Island in Assam, after scientists said the Island could die after a catastrophic drought.

In 1969, 16-year-old Jadav came face to face with a huge problem, when a major drought after a life-threatening flood left hundreds of snakes dead due to extreme heat.

At that time, scientists had declared the island dead within a few years.

In order to solve this, a young Jadav started planting one sapling every day in the middle of a barren wasteland in Assam.

Jadav did this for 35 years religiously, and now his efforts have finally paid off.

Known as the Forest Man of India, Jadav was able to raise a forest in a barren part of Majuli Island, spreading across 1,360 acres.

The forest, Molai, which is named after Jadav is two times larger than Central Park and is now a home to Royal Bengal tigers, elephants, rhinos, tigers, wild boars, reptiles, deer and vultures.

Even now, Payeng starts his day around 3 AM to reach Majuli by 5 AM to care for his woodland and collect seeds from plants to plant saplings.

To honour his hard work and perseverance, Jadav was awarded the highest civilian award, Padma Shri in 2015.

For Jadav, his forest is his family and he plans to plant 5,000 more acres of tress on Majuli, creating a 500-mile stretch of flora on the banks of Brahmaputra river.

Source:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/lifestyle/what-s-hot/story/this-indian-man-planted-a-tree-every-day-for-35-years-the-result-is-unbelievable-1309563-2018-08-09>

ROLE MODEL 2

Bengal Forest Officer Creates Garden Using Plastic Bottles, Rubber Tyres



Papan Mohanta's experiments have become an inspiration for locals as some schools have also created such type of garden.

A forest range officer (FRO) of Pirakata Range under Midnapur division has created a beautiful garden using waste plastic bottles and rubber tyres.

Papan Mohanta has been working to beautify the garden for the last four years and dedicates time to this cause after his usual work hours. Mr Mohanta makes use of space in his Pirakata range office to create this unique garden.

"There was a lot of waste here when I first got posting here. I wanted to beautify the area. After working on it, I feel good after people appreciate it which visiting here", he said.

His experiments have become an inspiration for locals as some schools have also created such type of garden.

flowers here. After seeing this garden, nearby schools also followed this method. CRPF jawans nearby did this too. It feels good when people take inspiration from you," he added. Mr Mohanta used 1,100 waste plastic bottles and rubber tyres for the garden.

Subinoy Ghosh, a school teacher said that he is trying to replicate similar endeavour in his school and added that this message to conserve environment will become a big movement.

"We should learn from this garden to save earth in future and to reshape plastic. I think if this message can be spread through school or other media then it can also become a big movement. Whenever needed I also get plants from here. I hope nearby other nurseries and forest offices will also replicate this, which will influence nearby schools also," he said.

Source:

<https://www.ndtv.com/kolkata-news/bengal-forest-officer-creates-garden-using-plastic-bottles-rubber-tyres-2101105>

News & Events

FRNV – Karnataka Chapter had conducted a meeting on October 25, 2019 along with President, Dr. E Sreedharan, Shri V Vishwanath- Convener, Bangalore Chapter and 20 other committed representatives. It was decided to start a task force for value based education and to take it forward.



Dear Readers,

FRNV invites stories from its readers on deep-rooted values that have helped us in our everyday lives. Some of these stories will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter. So put your thinking caps on, recall the values integral to your life which you cherish and write to us at shilpi@valuefoundation.in.

Chief Editor: Shri Gopal Ganesh