



Empowering Times

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Dear Reader,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for your enthusiastic response to our monthly e-connector.

Why is it that a child, which is tossed in the air by the father, has no fear and enjoys every moment? It is because the child has implicit trust in the father. Is it possible to build the same level of trust in employees, leaders, vendors and all stakeholders of the business? **P. Vijayan**, our Principal Consultant, ponders on this thought in the **Thinking Aloud** column.

Podium features **Dr. Narges Mahaluxmivala**, Senior Advisor at Quintiles, the leading Clinical Research Organization. She joined Quintiles at inception and played a key role in not only building the company, but shaping the CRO industry in India as well. Having groomed talent in large organizations, she generously shares with us the fundamentals of **'Nurturing Talent'**.

The book of the month is **'The Difficulty of Being Good – On the Subtle Art of Dharma'** by **Gurcharan Das**. In this book, the author looks at Mahabharata to answer the question of 'Why Be Good?'

As always, **Vikram** comes up with his twist in the story in the **Figures of Speech**.

You can also view our previous issues in the archive section ([Click here](#)) of our website.

Geetanjali Sharma
Editor

P.S. Oh, Yes! we have a new offering. For more information on **KEPNERandFOURIE**, email Jay.



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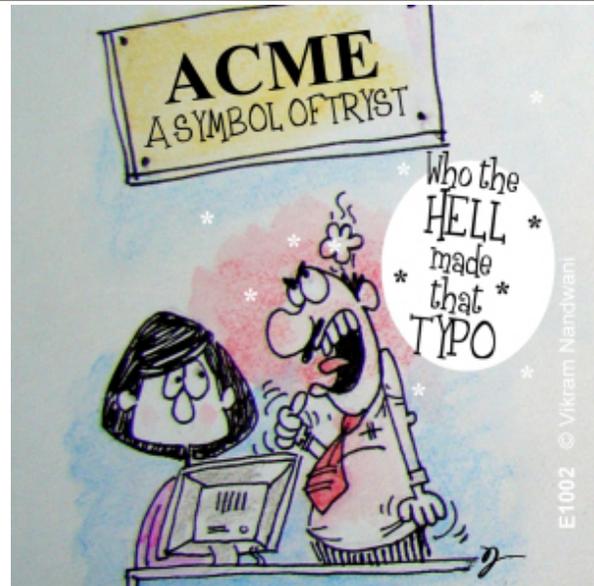
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THINKING ALOUD



THE 'BUSINESS CASE' FOR INVESTING IN TRUST - P Vijayan

Some time back a question was posed, "Vijayan, what is the business case for investing in building trust in an organization?" That was the first time I heard of such a question and I am sure it would not be the last time too! This is a challenging and an important question in the current living and economic context.

At home, each one of us relates to the other with implicit trust. Why should it be any different at the work place? Each one of us seeks trust both in personal and professional life. We trust little in others but complain that we are not trusted. Our mindset from an experience is forever trying to figure out 'the proof of benefit'. Trust is difficult to find outside of us. It is integrated in our being just like the newborn child implicitly trusts the mother and her touch.

When trust is consciously built-in and reinforced in a business organization, elaborate processes to control the output of external resources are not needed. If there is emphasis on self-certification of the quality of work, why should that not be trusted? It is this insight that has helped the manufacturing discipline move eons away from Quality Control towards Quality Assurance and now to Quality in Design...

...Yet organizational policies and systems reflect 'trust deprivation', resulting in perceived need for greater control.

Trust generates an empowering work environment leading to a leaner organization structure with a larger span of control and reduced costs. If the balance shifts towards trust, for the same output and level of excellence, two organizations can function with entirely different cost structures and hence be very different in financial performance too.

In a study of buyer-supplier relationship amongst eight major automakers in US, Japan and South Korea, (Jeffrey H Dyer and Wujin Chu, 2003¹) found a strong correlation between trust and procurement costs. The least trusted buyers incurred procurement costs that were five times higher than the costs of the most trusted buyers. Moreover, the least trusted companies in the study were also the least profitable.

When an organization invests and always strives to walk the talk on trust, there is no need for employees to be in any inter or intra departmental conflict. Calibrating with their internal compass employees are more productive and supervisors will have more time to concentrate on higher value work.

When trust is the cornerstone, transactions and contracts will incorporate a shorter list of "what will happen if you do not follow ..." and focus more on a longer list of what is expected of each other and how issues would be resolved, should conflict arise. Trust opens the doors to possibilities and scenarios to be co-created and dreamt about.

The value chain of an organization should be embedded with trust encompassing employees, customers and suppliers. Trust across the value chain results in sustainable business models and reduces costs associated with operations especially those arising out of conflict and strife.

D Seidman, a leading advisor on Corporate Virtue is quoted from the same publication mentioned earlier, "Globalization has made it increasingly difficult for companies to differentiate themselves based on their products alone. ...All the more important, then, for companies to compete at the level of behavior: crucially, how they treat customers and employees. It's about who has the most trust in their relationships, and where most people want to work. This will be the soft currency of the 21st century."

Happy trusting and laugh your and your organization's way to the bank!!!

¹Published in Fortune, February 2010

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PODIUM

ON 'NURTURING TALENT' WITH DR. NARGES MAHALUXMIVALA



Narges Mahaluxmivala is a physician with a postgraduate qualification in Physiology. During her tenure of almost three decades in the Indian pharmaceutical industry, beginning in 1969, she held positions of increasing responsibility including Board membership in a major pharmaceutical company.

Narges joined Quintiles India at its inception in 1997. Pioneering clinical development research in an environment in which awareness of GCP (Good Clinical Practice) was minimal, she led Clinical Operations over a period of 10 years up the credibility and capability curve. During that period her changing designations reflected her increasing responsibilities, the last being President, Clinical Operations, Quintiles India. She has contributed meaningfully, not only to the organization's increasingly important role in clinical research in India but also to shaping the growth, in India, of the industry as a whole.

Narges is a member of FERCI (Federation of Ethics Review Committees in India) and currently, co chair of the clinical research committee of FICCI. She remains associated with Quintiles India as Consultant.

Over the years Narges has been instrumental in spotting talent early and nurturing them to rise to their full potential. She has groomed many individuals who are today senior leaders in the Pharmaceutical and Clinical Research domain. Empowering Times spoke to her on 'Nurturing Talent', a subject very close to her heart.

ET: Talent today is a 'competitive advantage'. What does 'Talent' mean to an organization? How do you identify talent?

NM: I think your first question has two interpretations – 1) what 'having' talent means to an organization and 2) how the organization understands the word. Having talent in an organization confers, as you have also stated, a competitive advantage, as talent can be unique and non-copyable. The word 'talent' describes a special aptitude or capability which one individual has to a degree greater than others with similar academic backgrounds or similar technological knowledge. In addition, an individual who has high energy levels and an overall high intelligence with good analytical and social skills will also be considered talented. Talent needs to be defined for an organization and all in that organization should have the same understanding of what is being looked for. **It should not be forgotten that though talent may be easily recognizable, it is often dormant, awaiting an empathetic manager to uncover it.**

Identifying talent begins with an understanding of what is being looked for at the specific position level. With that in mind, recruiting and assessing managers look at different facets of the individual to make a judgment. I ask myself several questions in this regard. Some

"If there is emphasis on self-certification of the quality of work, why should that not be trusted?"

"Nurturing talent is not an activity delegated to a particular group - managers are to be encouraged to feel that

it is each one's obligation to develop talent."

examples are: 1) does the individual 'shine' ? By that I mean, is he or she alert, with a positive outlook and wide and varied interests? 2) Do school, college and past work experiences indicate leadership roles in sport, committees, teams? And most important to me, 3) does the individual reveal passion and ambition when describing goals?

When assessing talent at senior cadres, there are additional attributes to look for. Chief among them are the following: 1) does the individual have the ability to look at a question in a multidimensional manner? 2) Does the individual care for people and importantly, 3) is the individual able to establish relationships and also achieve results?

ET: What are the success-factors for running an institutionalized system for identifying, developing and retaining talent?

NM: Of importance is generating a talent mindset in the organization. This is most effective if championed by senior leadership. Nurturing talent is not an activity delegated to a particular group - managers are to be encouraged to feel that it is each one's obligation to develop talent. Training of the managers (who are carefully selected) in coaching, mentoring and empowering is essential. **Talented people will continue with an organization and give of their best if they are in a 'winning' organization and they have managers whom they respect and in whom they have confidence.** A 'winning' organization would have in place, besides market-matching salaries, appropriate financial and non- financial incentives, provide opportunities for continuous learning and to excel and demonstrate tangible appreciation of work well done and of work-life balance. It helps if push and pull factors are identified particularly for critical, must-retain individuals and these factors specifically dealt with.

ET: Juggling between motherhood and work is never easy and many young mothers opt to stay at home. How can organizations help talented women to maintain this balance?

NM: I am not comfortable with the word 'juggling' used in this context, though I am aware it is commonly employed by women who work. Though the word 'juggling' indicates the handling of more than one responsibility at the same time, it also implies that two or more aspects are not just balanced but balanced precariously. And the latter is not desirable for the organization or the home.

Mothers work for several reasons. Economic necessity is an easy to understand factor, especially by society in India, but women work even when that reason is not compelling. It is less easy for society to understand that women may feel the need to establish a sense of identity as individuals and realize the satisfaction that comes with achievement. Having said that, however, 'modern' in outlook the nuclear family is, housework and children's homework continue to be considered a woman's responsibility. Physical and emotional stress takes its toll and women either opt out of the work force or seek jobs that they can conduct from home often at lower remuneration.

The organization that looks at talented women as valued 'assets' will endeavor to create an environment which would provide meaning to their lives and create a marked 'pull' towards the organization. Realizing that stress and fatigue discourage high productivity, the ideal organization will take a multipronged approach – consider policies which manage energy levels of its women workers – avoiding unrealistic workloads and unreasonably long hours, provide rest rooms that are conducive to rest, may introduce flexible timings, allow work sharing if possible to allow part time attendance, working from home or if needed, child care facilities. Understanding mentors in the workplace build relationships and increase a sense of belonging. I have to remind that such policies need regular reassessment as women's needs change with time. Also, and this must be emphasized, employee needs are to be balanced against productivity and the latter must never be neglected.

ET: What is your advice to young female professionals who are constantly juggling issues and desperately seeking work-life balance?

NM: I have already made known my views on the word 'juggling', but would like to comment on the other term used here – 'desperately-seeking' If a talented woman is 'desperately' seeking work-life balance, I cannot but feel that a) her understanding of the phrase work-life balance is not quite correct and b) she is not experiencing either achievement or enjoyment. I would ask her that she dispassionately reviews her reasons for working and as important, who at home is affected by it. If there is no serious compulsion to work and if the children are affected by her absence from the home or if there are other pressures like an aged, ailing parent who needs constant attention, I would suggest that she temporarily gives up work. Talented women are re-employable (though seniority may be lost) and can return to the workplace when circumstances in the home change. I know a number of women who have done this and they indeed have a sense of fulfillment. I want to use a quotation here which is originally about fathers, but I am modifying it to apply to women – "Not every successful woman is a good mother, but every good mother is a successful woman".

Your question also mentions the much-used phrase, work-life balance, which I would like to comment on. First of all, the word 'life' which indicates enjoyment of life, does not necessarily begin solely when work ends. Also, the word 'balance' used in this context is commonly understood to be equal balance, an either-or concept. Such understanding allows the belief that if one of the two sides increase, the other should reduce. Consequently, the phrase is often considered to represent the number of hours spent in the office and outside it. In actual fact, the term work-life balance takes into account the achievement AND the enjoyment experienced by the woman and is therefore never constant. It varies because each of us has different priorities at different times of life and under different circumstances. For example, the single woman and the woman with small children will think of work-life balance differently. Essential is the fact that in each case, a balance needs to be struck for that particular woman between work and home.

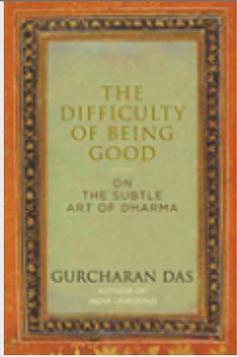
Such balance is contributed to immensely if the organization provides congenial conditions in the work place. These have been referred to earlier. Enlightened organizations will develop strategies to maintain work-life balance for its talented women, but often overlooked in discussions is what the employee can do for herself which contributes to work-life balance. Working women who are successful at work and who enjoy life, prioritize, plan and schedule not just at work but also at home. They make efforts to keep weekends free from work and consciously develop new interests. These women have a wide circle of friends. Most important, these women are not afraid of hard work. Such women have control over their lives and when satisfaction in a woman's personal life is balanced with satisfaction at her job, it benefits the woman and the organization.

ET: Having nurtured talent over your career, could you please share 3 of your success secrets?

NM: I have certain principles, which I believe in, but they are not secrets and every person in an organization committed to talent management will practice them. My personal emphasis is on the following:

- 1) Be genuinely interested in people and in their personal and professional development – help people to develop to their fullest potential
- 2) Always strive to be fair and never go back on your word
- 3) Find ways to motivate people and demonstrate to them that they are respected and valued employees

BETWEEN THE LINES



BOOK: "The Difficulty of Being Good" - Gurcharan Das

This book is another example of Gurcharan Das's erudition and mastery. As he explains, this book is the result of an 'Academic Holiday'- a resolve to spend the next few years reading the Mahabharata. It is a story of his personal search for Dharma and its understanding. He also explains how the great Indian Epic Mahabharata could help us understand our present day dilemmas. His analysis of Dharma is honest, reflective and insightful.

This book shows why the Mahabharata is a classic and yet relevant in today's world where we constantly face Dharmic challenges. His use of contemporary sciences like evolutionary biology as well as the Prisoner's Dilemma to explain the practical wisdom of the Bhagavat Gita is brilliant.

Gurcharan Das, through a close reading of the classical texts and good understanding of modern philosophical arguments, addresses modern conflicts making this book instructive and yet an easy read.

The book is divided into various episodes and in each one; the author offers his own insights and connections in a flowing and narrative style that keeps one reflecting.

Take a pause and sip from this fount of wisdom.

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