



August 2012



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Standing Ovation

Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj(SGBS) Trust, Bangalore

Dear Reader,

As we were preparing for this month's newsletter, Theodore Roosevelt's notable statement kept ringing in my mind, ' The best thing you can do is the right thing; the next best thing you can do is the wrong thing; the worst thing you can do is nothing' . How true and how simple and straight! Think, if the human race would have done nothing since evolution, where would we be today? If we have to evaluate what got us from there to here, I will not be wrong in putting it in a single word – ' Change' . This month's ET is about Leading Change. Change per se may or may not always be good or bad; but a change with more positive outcomes as compared to the negative ones, is a desirable change. So it is important that the leader who drives change must believe in positive change and should effectively convey the right message to all the stakeholders. Hope you find this issue to be thought provoking and change inducing!



In tandem with the ' Change' theme, we present to you the new-look Empowering Times. We have changed the look and modified some sections, keeping in view the continuous feedback we receive from you all. So please do keep the communication flowing and help us in providing an enhanced knowledge product.

In **Thinking Aloud** this month, Jay writes about the Change Master. He says that often we are so engrossed with our own little world that we lose track of the external environment, which essentially leads to lost opportunities and stymied growth potential. Organisations, which profess to be ' innovative' , are seen restricting innovation to products and services while the enterprise ecosystem is sidetracked. But Jay says, while this is true, it is also heartening to come across ' Change Masters' who help the organisation navigate in times of difficulty. He says that a change master's role is not easy and the journey definitely is not short, in fact larger the organisation, graver are the potential threats. But what matters most is the energy and enthusiasm of the change leader, which is a

direct outcome of a mind-set which sees opportunity in adversities and a willingness to pursue the positive vision.

On the **Podium** this month we present **Susir Kumar, Executive Chairman, Global Services, Serco**. Being at the helm of Intelenet Global which grew from 25 employees to 32,000 and was recently acquired by Serco, he has been effectively traversing the change journey. He shares with us his thoughts on why some change efforts fail and what are the ‘ musts’ to achieve success in the efforts. He shares with us some steps taken by him and his team to successfully implement the transformation process and provides insights on a leader’ s perspective of driving the process. He believes that seamless communication across the organisation is the key for effective implementation of a change process.

We have replaced the **Between the lines** section with a new section named - **We Recommend** In today’ s world of knowledge, while books continue to be important resources to educate the mind, other forms and media alternatives have also emerged as useful resources. Be it videos on YouTube, important articles on personal blogs or online research studies and articles, there is a plethora of information in the digital form as well. So we thought, why not give our readers the best of all worlds? This month’ s recommendation is offbeat, as Rohan Shahane shares with us some movies which contain some important management lessons. Take some time off and watch some of them!

Standing Ovation this month features SGBS Trust, a Bangalore based NGO which brings the best of art and cultural programs ‘ Utsav’ to the general public in Bangalore and runs programs to reach educational benefits to the economically underprivileged sections of the society and provides vocational training for the unemployed youth. For its cause and its determination, the SGBS trust deserves a Standing Ovation!

In **Figures of Speech**, Vikram presents the Change Manager’ s job in a lighter note!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Linked In](#) & [Google+](#).



Thinking Aloud

In Praise of the Change Master - Jay

Jack Welch is famously credited with having said that ‘ If the rate of change on the outside is greater than the rate of change on the inside, then the end is near’ . Not many get this message easily as we are too bound to the paradigms that we are living in - and the success generated by our existing models makes us unaware of the winds of change blowing around us. Or, as it sometimes happens, we are too complacent in our world to shake off inertia and try something out of the norm.

Strange as it may seem, I have noticed that this inertia is on display in firms who tout 'innovation' as one of their professed values too! Such firms are sometimes victims of their success and have restricted their definition of 'innovation' to mere products and services and fail to see that it encompasses all that they do – in their thinking, policies and practices, enterprise-wide. In time, they succumb to change that stealthily creeps across the organisational boundaries, while the gate-keepers expected it to come through the main doors.

But there are exceptions to this scenario. In the midst of turbulence, there also are some Change Masters, to borrow Rosabeth Kanter's term. They are the ones who guide the organisational ship through starlight, being prepared to tackle challenges even in rough seas.

Yet too often change initiatives fail. It is believed that real enterprise-wide change takes at least three to five years. If you are not prepared to invest this amount of time in a patient journey of change, there is about 70 percent chance that your initiative will fail, particularly if you are part of a large organisation. In fact, larger the organisation, the more difficult it is to make the aircraft carrier turn. Interestingly, even if your organisation is slim and narrow like a speed boat racing in the sea, any sharp turn that you suddenly make is likely to send some people overboard, particularly those who were oblivious to their surroundings and did not see the change of course coming.

Professor John Kotter's work in this domain has been seminal. He outlines an eight step framework for change. The task of Leadership is to create a sense of urgency for change, says Kotter. This is not restricted to the technology sector alone, and Grove's message that only the paranoid survive should not be seen only as a sectoral prescription. Once the crisis hits a firm (as it did to many in 2008), urgency is bound to be created. But, this reactive behavior does not bring out the best in us, as more often than not, fighting the emergency fire leaves us exhausted in spirit, if not in other ways, including poorer in financial resources. In this enervated situation, rallying troops is a bitter challenge for even the best of Generals.

Contrast this with a firm that has created an agile and nimble culture where the message always has been that disruptions are just around the corner – and disrupters are not treated as anarchists. One can picture such an organisation as being on their toes, ready to raise the mast and set sail when new winds arrive.

Kotter suggests that central to the change effort is a coalition of like-minded elements. Coalescing a set of believers into a powerful central force will accelerate the change process, and good leaders take it upon themselves to create this core set of apostles who can evangelize the message of change around a new vision of tomorrow. Attracted by the compelling message of a new dawn, early adapters join the movement, with all the fervor of a new convert. However raucous this rabble may seem, the Change Master knows that only constant communication with them will keep them going - and in fact, generating 'wins' for them, even with low hanging fruits, serves as a reinforcement of the change message and propels the movement forward.

Sustaining the change process requires unbelievable stamina, as much is asked of the leaders. Sadly, too often the movement peters out if a second wind is not generated in time. Where smart leaders succeed is because they have begun a process of institutionalisation of the message of change, thereby keeping the process alive, and even in some cases, giving it a new identity distinct from their own person. Better still is when a new set of core believers begin to take charge and own the process. Thus, the message goes forward, even if the prophet of change is no more in the forefront.

Is this a flight of fancy or can this be done? Be it an organisation or a country, students of change have noticed these distinct phases. Where do the Change leaders get the stamina to sustain the change process that they

begin? The answer lies in their mind-set. Where others see obstacles, they continue to ask possibility inducing questions of themselves in every situation. And, even more important, their actions are driven by the passionate pursuit of a positive vision of a better tomorrow. This gives them a reason to live for, in Viktor Frankl' s words, and empowers them to lead change even in the most adverse of situations. Change Masters: may your tribe increase!

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Podium

Susir Kumar, Executive Chairman, Global Services, Serco



Susir Kumar is currently the Executive Chairman Global Services, the newly created business services division of Serco.

In this role, Susir is responsible for defining the overall corporate strategy, while closely working with the leadership team in an advisory capacity. He is instrumental in steering the way forward for mergers & acquisitions, expansion in new geographies, branding and image building for the division.

Prior to this, Susir has served as the Chief Executive Officer of Intelenet Global Services, a leading provider of Business Process Outsourcing services to the private sector that was acquired by Serco Group Plc, in May 2011.

He has been the key architect of Intelenet' s growth story, since its inception in October 2000. During his tenure, Intelenet grew by leaps and bounds – from 25 employees to over 32,000 employees and expanded its global footprint across seven countries. He has been actively involved in achieving several milestones for the organisation, including the first management buy-out by Blackstone and subsequently the acquisition of Intelenet by Serco to catapult it to the next level of growth.

Having spent over a decade carving the BPO business, Susir has built a reputation for his strong work ethics and establishing a people-centric organisation. Susir has also been associated in the past with HDFC for setting up several profitable group companies. With more than 23 years of experience, he brings a passion for people and technology.

He is an Associate Member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and holds a Bachelor' s Degree in Business Management. He also holds a Masters degree (M.Phil) in Philosophy and charity.

ET: What according to you is the primary reason for a change process not bringing about the desired change? What are some of the basic tenets for ensuring a successful journey?

SK: George Bernard Shaw' s quote on change lingers in my mind as I read this question – ‘ Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything’ . To set the context, change and progressive transformation has been at the core of our organisation for the past one year. As you would know Serco has formed a new Global Services division, a logical step towards integrating the BPO play with a view to present a single face to customers while providing seamless, end-to-end outsourcing services. The new integrated BPO capability will have revenues of USD 1.1 bn (by CY 2012), and would transform the pecking order of the BPO industry, globally and in India.

Ever since then, we understood that change management entails thoughtful planning and sensitive implementation; and above all, consultation with, and involvement of, the people affected by the change. One of the basic tenets of ensuring a smooth transition is that it must be realistic, achievable and measurable.

Prior to starting organisational change, we posed a set of questions to ourselves: What do we want to achieve with this change? Why, and how, will we know that the change has been achieved? Who is affected by this change, and how will they react to it? How much of this change can we achieve ourselves, and what parts of the change do we need help with? These aspects also relate strongly to the management of personal as well as organisational change.

Inherently, change needs to be understood and managed in a way that people can cope effectively with it. Change can be unsettling, and the manager needs to be a settling influence.

ET: In an organisation, what is the first step to be undertaken while initiating a transformation process? Please share with us some examples from your experience of transforming INTELENET to SERCO.

SK: These are the change management principles one must keep in mind before embarking on a phase of transition.

- At all times, involve and agree support from people within the system (system = environment, processes, culture, relationships, behaviours, etc., whether personal or organisational)
- Understand where you / the organisation are at the moment
- Understand where you want to be, when, why, and what are the measures you will have to take to get there
- Communicate, involve, enable and facilitate involvement from people, as early and openly and as fully as is possible.

We also went through our own evolution and transformation phase.

First example: Acquisition of Intelenet by Serco and the ensuing transformation process

Erstwhile Intelenet was a strategic fit in Serco' s broader strategy of foraying into the BPO business giving it access to the private sector. In addition to the commercial BPO market, Serco has also acquired a stronger play in the fast-growing domestic Indian market.

Furthermore, by virtue of a sudden shift and realigning several related operations and capabilities currently reported and managed in different Serco divisions, we have successfully created the Global Services division. In doing so, we have attempted to enhance our market position and transition from being an India based BPO with revenues of USD 300 mn to a global service provider with revenues of USD 1.1 bn. This was possible, given the depth and expertise of the management team at Intelenet that has stayed since the Intelenet acquisition. I have led Intelenet since its

inception, seen it grow over the years and would now aspire to see the organisation achieve its next phase of growth.

Second Example: Creation of the STG

The Strategic Transformation Group at Serco Global Services was created to pave the way forward for the BPO division and help it achieve the following objectives:

- Realize Cost Efficiencies (For both Serco Group and the Operating Divisions), which include Shared Service Centre set up onshore and offshore, blueprinting, transitioning etc.
- Weaving the growth curve of the USD 1 bn BPO division and drive inorganic growth
- Integration of BPO Assets (from three divisions) which includes transfer of companies, carving out BPO contracts into respective SBUs, and support communication and consultation activities
- BPO division strategy development, program management and thought leadership
- Lead Merger and Acquisition initiatives in conjunction with Group Merger and Acquisition functions
- Brand strategy development and implementation – value proposition, collateral development, and road shows etc.
- Build and manage the Knowledge Repository to support the BPO division's five year strategy of growth and profitability

ET: While undergoing a change process, how is a leader's perspective different from the follower's perspective? What are some necessary abilities that a leader must demonstrate to be an effective change leader?

SK: When an organisation undergoes change a leader chalks out the way forward to permeate the change within the system smoothly. He does the following:

- Set vision and goals of the organisation in perspective of the change
- Define the road ahead in the light of changes
- Choose the appropriate people to deliver the changes
- Monitor and review the progress

A change leader should demonstrate the following abilities:

- He / She should be able to communicate and convince that change is the progressive evolution of the organisation
- He / She must ensure that the employees are engaged and involved and feel like they are a part of the change. As a result they are more adaptable to change

Followers look up to their leader to chart out the strategic course of action and help the leader in implementing the strategic vision.

ET: How did the employees at SERCO react to the change process initiated by you? How did your team manage expectations at every level across the organisation?

SK: Our employees embraced the change as they truly believe that changing with the times is the best way to surge

forward in a positive direction.

My management team and I dedicated significant amount of our time to cascade this message through multiple communication channels as follows:

- Employee forums and town halls
- Leadership Briefing Sessions, who would then pass on the message to their respective teams

We communicated the following to set expectations with our employees at all levels.

- They were now a part of Serco -a US\$ 7 bn global company, hence a larger brand name
- They would now get international exposure
- There would be significant role enrichment and cross functional expertise

ET: Your industry (ITES) is a fast changing one and the players have had to reinvent themselves in the last 5 years. What are the 3 major changes you expect in your industry over the next 5 years?

SK:

- The next phase of BPO industry would be centred on the levers of consolidation, transformation and growth
- There would be a shift from FTE based pricing to transaction based pricing
- The pricing models would now be outcome based vis-a vis earlier effort based pricing

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We Recommend

Movies by Rohan Shahane.

The London Olympics are now part of history. New heroes were born on this stage and legends have been created (think Bolt!)

This month, Rohan Shahane, Principal Consultant with ELS, in keeping with the Olympic spirit, recommends the following classics, which have oodles of management lessons:

**Chariots of Fire Miracle (2004)
(1981)**

Without Limits (1998) Olympia (1938)

**The Jesse Owens
Story (1984)**



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Standing Ovation

**Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan
Samaj (SGBS) Trust, Bangalore**



“ With society, towards serenity”

SGBS was founded in 1978, and the SGBS Trust was set up in 1993. The organisation has been at the forefront in bringing the best of art and cultural programs ‘ Utsav’ to the general public in Bangalore. In the early nineties, the Trust initiated programs to reach educational benefits to the economically underprivileged sections of the society under the program ‘ Shiksha’ . In 2003, realising that school education alone is not sufficient to integrate the underprivileged into the mainstream society, they started ‘ Unnati’ , a program that provides vocational training and ensures placement in organisations of repute.

The SGBS trust conducts the following programs:

- **Shiksha; School education for under privileged children:** Shiksha provides educational assistance to underprivileged children every year. This year, 430 students have been enabled. The Shiksha program extends financial support to kids from underprivileged background to continue with their education. The program covers a part of the educational expense which is paid directly to the school concerned.
- **Unnati; Vocational training for unemployed youth:** Unnati was started in Oct 2003 with the purpose of enabling underprivileged, unemployed youth to get employed. The motto of Unnati, ‘ learn, earn, stand tall’ is aimed not only to enable them to become ‘ employable’ and engage in a gainful job, but also to transform them in to responsible citizens. Unnati admits youth aged above 18 years from underprivileged (below poverty line) families. Unnati’ s vision is to train and employ a million youth by 2020. Unnati was

started in a two bedroom rented premise, churning out around 70 youth per year in two vocations. In 2008 thestate-of-the-art Unnati Center was set up, which currently trains more than 450 youth per year. These youth are provided not just training in their vocations but are also trained on life skills, spoken English and computers, apart from being provided nutritious meals and accommodation if they are from outside Bangalore. All of this is provided entirely free to the beneficiaries. Eight other Unnati Centers are now functional across the country.

- **Utsav; Preserving traditions, promoting art and culture:** Utsav is aimed at preserving traditions and promoting art & culture. It is a program which brings joy to the masses. It is a celebration of life through music, dance and other art forms. Utsav has been a major fundraising platform for SGBS Trust and its programs. SGBS Trust provides over 50 days of free programs each year and is also a platform to encourage fresh talent.
- **Samstha; Funeral services:** At times when there is a loss of life, families are in a state of shock and dismay to organize the funeral services and customary rituals. Sanathana Dharma Samstha facilitates the funeral and all associated services at that hour of need.

For its purpose and its unrelenting efforts, the SGBS Trust deserves a ***Standing Ovation!***

If you want to get more information and support the SGBS Trust, you can visit the website unnatibl.org or write an email at contactus@unnatibl.org

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