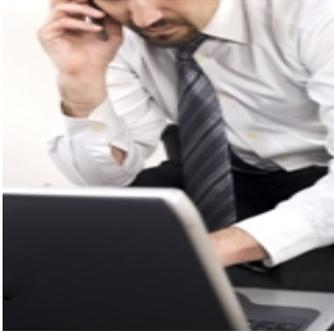


By V Pradeep Kumar



Getting an organisation to move ahead is indeed the most difficult task, for any corporate leader. This is somewhat easier with a new organisation, but most difficult when you start leading an existing organisation. I had, I would say, the good fortune of leading an existing organisation caught in its own vicious circle, coming in as an unwelcome outsider.

In an existing organisation the most difficult task to handle is the deep rooted mindset of managers and employees. This should also be the first to tackle, as without a new mindset or a positive attitude, nothing can ever be changed. A leader is an agent of change and every change meets with resistance.

Leadership Skill

Further, if there are let us say 100 employees in an organisation, it's difficult to convince everyone about the viability of a new path or direction. Unfortunately an influential inside skeptic has an initial edge over even a brilliant new leader and it is a daunting task to unshackle the established organisational myths. In such a situation, a leader needs to have complete command over the industry apart from an array of all leadership skills, in good measure. Let's remember that initially, it could even be 1 vs. 100 and one may have to be prepared to begin even from this level.

To move ahead, especially when carrots don't work and good sense doesn't prevail, a Leader is forced to use the stick, as a last resort. In corporate world, this generally means giving a strong message across the organisation using different tactics including firing the undesirable elements who could be key bottle necks. A leader then has to ensure that the message is understood

clearly and get the entire organization in the listening mode.

Once the organisation is in the listening mode, serious business begins. I would like to call this as 'meeting of the minds' and is a process of two way communication, when the 'Vision and Mission' of the organisation is evolved. Once the Vision and Mission statements are in place, the corporate strategies are generally an outcome. All management staff and senior employees should preferably be involved in the process of evolving the new strategies and where that's not feasible, it's critical that they understand every word of vision, mission and corporate strategies.

Leading by Examples

A good leader should be quick to identify talent within the organisation and groom them, especially the second line of leadership. It won't be wrong for a leader to spend maximum time with this group, building dreams for the organisation. In fact, a good leader has to balance his task orientation with people orientation.

The leadership style has to be hands-on with complete involvement in all organisational activities - routine or strategic. A leader is a teacher, but also a student. While leading by example, it's necessary that the leader should happily make personal sacrifices and set examples of personal discipline before expecting others to make. For instance, when I found people were not coming on time, I was one of the first to arrive, before asking everyone to be on time. Similarly, while expecting people to put in extra hours on weekdays and work on weekends, I was there myself too. Such examples of personal leadership have to be demonstrated and sustained over a long period of time, until the organisational goals are achieved. In other words, as a leader, be prepared to set personal examples to achieve success.

Looking ahead, leadership is quite a challenging task. In retrospect, the process of successfully leading an organisation can be very satisfying and one can achieve commanding heights of professional and personal progress.

About the Author

Mr.V Pradeep Kumar, hailing from Bangalore has over 28 years of hardcore management experience in all aspects of management in a variety of Industries including FMCG, Industrial marketing, Media and Publishing. Currently based at Dubai, his focus in the last fifteen years has been on Media and Publishing.

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