

# CULTURAL ENGINEERING FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

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In short, what I am saying is to put power of India's history, culture, literature, art, mathematics, darshan-shastra and spiritual nature all together combined in pursuit of personal excellence with corporate excellence to achieve India's leadership at world level.

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This essay is my thoughts on your corporate mission to become a global leader which also reflects India's aspiration to reach the top of the world. To achieve this audacious goal, does your company have the collective power of entire community truly behind her? Does your work culture help each employee achieve his true potential, his "Human Excellence"?

Best way to compete is to avoid competition. The best way to avoid competition is to sell products/service that competitors can't replicate. This can be achieved either by Price, Quality or Innovation. Technology has enabled us to do anything we want but key question is what to do and how to do it. Can modern technology help us translate employee abilities towards corporate mission?

All sports people have similar goals. Can imitating someone else's strategy make you a success? Your company's future is based on her own unique view of her ideals, her methods to realize her own vision and by creating new opportunities based on her strengths and weaknesses. What about performance of people, teams and entire community? How would you measure movement of large group of people towards a big audacious goal? Remember, it took the Wright brothers over 805 attempts to get it right. Even then they only flew a matter of meters.

Even Success of State of the Art IT Systems is dependent upon people. Organization should be viewed as network of human computers. Modern workplaces have shifted from controlling staff to autonomous working style.

**Three crucial factors for success of Global mission are:** (1) Work Culture (2) People with Vision (3) Change Management. Today, I am focussing only on first step of building appropriate work culture.

## **UNDERSTANDING CULTURE**

Culture is based on (a) Values, (b) Beliefs and (c) Behaviour Norms with six key components as (1) Economy (2) Environment (3) Values (4) Art (5) Entertainment (6) People (7) Communication. It combines attitudes, beliefs, customs, traditions, dressing, manner of greeting, art, range of permitted group behaviour, tolerance and achievements of society that are passed on to each generation. They are basic ideas of right and wrong such as: loyalty to nation as sense of duty and example of wrong is abuse of authority.

Organizational culture can be engineered, programmed by design to create, grow and manage

the intellectual, spiritual and emotional energy of each employee for common purpose. Of course, lack facilities, discouragement, bureaucracy, hierarchical structure, administrative politics were also there for our Tendulkar before he arrived on the international circuit? Similar is quest for global leadership. Organization Culture is observable at three levels behavior and artifacts, dress code, level of technology, way people greet and the physical layout of surroundings.

Work environment should represent: (1) who people are, (2) what they were and (3) what they want to be; and (4) their value system. The architectural design, work culture, infrastructure must have strong symbols, elements that showcase living vision moments of that global mission, its unique ideals and values that are celebrated by the community and also showcase its unique identity and brand.

The deepest level of organization culture is underlying assumptions, including truth, reality, and ways of thinking and feeling developed through repeated success in solving problem. Application of these designs can speak about beliefs, values and practices of the company, resulting in organizational memory, and become basis for future improvisation.

## **BUILDING KNOWLEDGE**

(Frame work for Business, IT and HR Innovation)

There is nothing more practical than a good theory. First step is to theoratise the organizational knowledge. Only right people with right information at the right time can achieve operational excellence. And to build right knowledge, we need right questions!

I am talking of a well expressed and logical long term plan for the intellectual assets of your company for change management and innovations. IT revolution is helping companies re-examine the logic, values, perception to make decision making clearer and easier. Working hard in wrong way is worse than no-action. Sometimes right theory should be the prerequisite of working hard. Does your organization have that theory? philosophy?

Standard Knowledge Management and Leadership programmes focus on system development but totally ignore the real cultural and leadership issues in work culture which must be considered.

Cultural engineering is the art that alone realize audacious goals of the corporate. Cultural engineering must facilitate (1) Leadership Management (2) Knowledge Management (3) Developing Knowledge culture (4) Create a learning

organization (5) Progressive development (6) Create new assets

Newly created mantras have space of creativity and are dynamic and adaptable. This new knowledge is explicit in nature –can be documented, categorized, transmitted, explained. This involves IT management, HR Management and Business Management goals all synthesized together.

### **COMBINING INDIVIDUAL PURPOSE WITH ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE**

Mission centric, Vision focussed Work culture is like manifesting a philosophy - where work culture and people are self propelling towards a goal. This is the very spirit that drives entrepreneurship in America. It means having objectives for financial results combined with innovative and artistic creation + an independent identity/brand + conquered clients. Some call it power of full engagement some call it combining pursuit of personal excellence through intellectual/ creative/ spiritual passion.

Work environment must have vision moments, for example. In my office, I noticed that a gentleman who always made it a point to use less of paper; he preferred double sided printing and even recycled printed paper by using it for office purposes. He probably irons his socks and keeps them in the little hanger they come with as well but I found his commitment to save paper positively influencing everyone around. In appreciation of which I gave him a table top poster, with statistics on contribution of trees and how important it is to save paper.

This recognition or positive re-enforcement was motivating and gave him a unique identity. He became the “paper police” and sort of evangelist for saving trees, who kept on spreading important message in the entire office community. This ethical incentive strengthened not just him but faith of everyone around in his goodness and nobility. This poster was the vision moment of that person that represented his unique and his thinking!

Anyone in your company can become a knowledge leader. Key requirements is to have vision, ability to motivate, good communication skills and willingness to act as change agent, as a coach, mentor people and facilitate learning for a large number of people. It also means making you are only vehicle for this goal and not a forceful boss, real power lies in influencing change processes through indirect, truthful and honest means.

### **KNOWLEDGE BASED E-COMMUNITY**

Knowledge workers produce tacit knowledge, which is hard to reproduce. Before we translate this knowledge into tangible products/services we need to know which people hold the key to such knowledge and how to enable other members of community to get access to this knowledge. This is making of e- work place, e-culture, e-community.

This way multiple knowledge hubs can be created for coordination, distribution of various kinds of knowledge as per the interest of the person/group. Thereafter the dispersion in large group of people a knowledge web is created forming a virtual knowledge community like an online group which are people with common interest who can share their insights to develop better solutions to problems faced. People choose to be part of this group because they recognize the value of knowledge sharing. By this knowledge we are building capacity of each employee, promoting knowledge sharing as core competency. The community add extra values and developing a strategic direction of each knowledge community. Group member has a knowledge advantage over other employees.

These knowledge groups will form virtual communities, for knowledge planning, a knowledge culture, bring in collaborative opportunities, networked community support, and help set knowledge strategy, framework of corporate strategy, organizational analysis of core competencies,.

This fosters socialization, these design elements could about history, memory, emotion and ideologies but they certainly address the chaotic, complex and multi-layered aspects of organization by organizing into resonances, they reap employee morale, commitment and hard work. They enhance the corporate spirit, just like some companies have corporate anthems for reflection of corporate culture.

New knowledge teams created can operate for number of purposes, such as generation of new ideas and strategies, identifying creative solutions, collecting data and sharing information etc.

### **FURTHER EXPERIMENT WITH TRUTH**

I respectfully gifted custom designed Table Top Frames to some wonderful people which contained a quote or value based quote or picture of a famous person which best suited their aspirations, goals or resembled their personality, like Mother Teresa, Netaji Bose etc This token of social recognition, inspired people to become a living embodiment of

that intellectual idea they truly believed in. Not just vision moments, this was tapping their personal philosophy, thinking, individuality, holistic abilities, untapped potential for a good rapport or relationship building. Respect of Individual, Joy of Recognition supported a re-enforced righteousness and added value to the actual situation. Appreciation of individual nobility was rejuvenated in pursue of its common good in each situation.

By Intelligent designs, by rewarding deserving people - one can nurture the untapped creativity of group, build in long lasting work system intelligence and righteousness in people behaviour. Since these designs were given to people who already had behaviour that represented the ideals shown in the posters or table to frames, it inspired others and attracted likeminded people towards them. Likeminded people came to appreciate and started doing the as a group. This small paper saving group was not powered by organizational politics or authoritative direction. A common social cognition engine for saving paper was ready in embryo stage!

There was no secret engineering. To ensure that my personality did not influence this token giving or that I do not gain any favour from this deal I did not disclosed my identity during these efforts. Distribution of correct knowledge was important for me but the degree of success is dependent upon how actively people embraced this knowledge. Leadership consulting companies have the same challenge, while they are focussing on people or system development the are forgetting the crux – real cultural and leadership issues.

### **MAKE PEOPLE YOUR TECHNOLOGY**

Capable people are driving force for dynamic development. I am saying reverse - Create dynamic environment which drives natural capabilities of people into a force that drives you towards the common goal. Excellence through machines and work system are measurable and therefore improvable.

This application of a positive recognition was not an intellectual stimulation but a way to create a wave of thinking, ownership by virtue, taking responsibility, in which each employee creates value somewhere in the value change of organization and the world.

This cross linked network of understanding and agreement among title less leaders, increased their influence on common conscious thinking and behavior. They also addressed the emotional aspects of organizations that are commonly referred to as cohesion or camaraderie.

Engineer's job is to combine what is ingenious in analysis and what is genius is an invention or creation. This cultural engineering will symbolize professionalism in cultural and para cultural fields.

### **CREATING DYNAMO OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEADERSHIP**

Characteristics of good leaders are (1) Detailed knowledge of organizational priorities (2) Development of work culture to facilitate priorities (3) create good people leaders and practices for the same and (4) Encourage high standards of performance.

Second step was to create dynamo of cycle knowledge creation.

Every company has its hardware and software of its social structure. Software is the conceptual system that backs the hardware, which is the philosophy of logic. Cultural Events: Exhibition, Festival, Salons and Fairs Tell everyone your organization's purpose. Tell everyone where organization is headed. Openly discuss what you are trying to do, goals and objectives and why you are doing what you are doing. More people know about the mission, easier it is for them to connect and align with it. This could be done by hanging posters, letters, special publications etc.

Global mission can be crystallized in form of emblems, posters, songs, letters, e-cards for internal and external communication. This will awaken the unmanaged social cognition engine of community. Once, ideas are propelled, into work system, process cannot be stopped; neither can it go backwards; it continuously spirals on to clients and internal staff. Knowledge is now getting improvised and analysed in in new and improved ways and this cyclic knowledge synthesis is multi dimensional and not just circular.

### **KNOWLEDGE CYCLE**

Knowledge leader produces knowledge in organizational context which is strategic and based on company's work culture, this lays foundation for the knowledge systems and HR are trained accordingly. Upon application learning and development takes place and an enhanced view for review and sustainability is obtained by evaluation.

These inspirational thoughts further stimulated their goodness. This is not about mind control or brain washing but but about orchestration of a group – not by push or pull but by inspiration, so that entire human potential is motivated towards a goal of common good. Each employee is evangelist of a noble mission.

Abstract concepts theories and concepts are absorbed by the employees and understanding and adoption of knowledge is gained, knowledge is diffused. Further if it is about client/procedure or work methods it can be converted or developed into applications and outcomes can again be adapted and refined for practical purposes. Basically Knowledge is converted and codified for embodiment as tacit knowledge of individuals.

This is similar to how advertising works and people are swayed in large numbers to buy a new product. Difference here is that we not selling anything but propelling good ideas and aim to nurture a culture which are in cohesion with goals of common good and organizational priorities.

In this culture each person has become a craftsman, an artist of his passion, and he himself transfers his knowledge to their children and young generation. The environment is non violent, safe, enjoyable, non controlling and emotionally positive/healthy.

Once organizations combine profit maximization with common good, they can attempt to influence thoughts, feelings and reasoning, clarity. In whole, these designs develop a common social cognition engine by thoughtful sequence, placement and design placements for simulation by static designs.

### **DEMOCRATIZED, VALUE BASED CULTURE**

Basis of this knowledge are universal values which are context free, objective, practical, and time tested. Truth is dynamic and is developed through through dynamic process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. To initiate this cycle of truth, I further simulated by static designs - distributed more 150 e-cards on the theme of "Spirit of Engineers", "New Age Management Mantras", "Art and Engineering". Purpose was to focus on "Mission" more and "Management" less. This management development by positive suggestions helped in promoted dialogue, debate and consensus on the common goal.

What is impressive about design visualization and literature is that it transforms the mind of reader into the state of the mind of the person who created it. These e-cards are pillars on what company stands for, what people believe in, universal ideas. These designs allow thinking beyond the facts, beyond the statistics and obvious logic. Such knowledge art work is sign of unified collective life and is enjoyed by anyone who enjoys the work. It brings in direction of greater order and unity and develops new experience of perception.

Started open ended dialogue, and helped create a higher level of understanding. Initially it was a zig-zag process but led to something new. This action of e-card cycle was more powerful than words. I converted received responses into knowledge and again externalized my learning in form of e-cards to operationalize the same for organizational goal.

This knowledge was increasingly became basis of discussion. Mission was getting socialized. I expect people will actualize it through their action, thinking, reflection through my letters and this information will be internalized by people and the company. These post cards were also the social glue – change agents for the common social consciousness, internal branding and social identity.

### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Organizational Leaders are not those people who direct and discipline their own performance through work/feedback of their colleagues and juniors. Your junior may benefit from the knowledge that you are sharing but not the experience that you have got. Company should see the employees for what they can become, not what they are now. This is how an organization can create and re-create its value based culture and behaviour in the employees.

Celebrations, Get together, Statues, Artefacts, Symbols are the infrastructure of the culture.

Challenge is to get people who bring in the required change within the organization for the global leadership and in doing so face not only should get least resistance from the staff but should earn trust of the people and get information and knowledge that they need to build new set of work cultural infrastructure for future.

It's not just about efficiency but effectiveness! Effectiveness of people, without which there will be organizational resistance to every change. Idea is to convert people into systems and use people as basis of technology and keep on building new people as you build new projects.

In a way company is becoming collection of small companies, each of which has a small entrepreneur/leadership based group, which is not because of departmental work but because of common thoughts and actions. This facilitated multiple approaches, interactive learning, mentoring and coaching, structure for innovation, political and psychological support,

Entire process is build around IDEA – I is for initiating innovation by design at small level, being first, attempting to create future. **D** stands for Defining. It means dealing with the right issue at

the right level, dealing with cause of offering creative solutions. **E** stands for Exploring new ideas, solutions and perspectives, building ideas on ideas, brainstorming and day dreaming. **A** stands for Acting, overcoming barriers, gaining commitment, implementing ideas, taking innovation to market, managing the idea to completion, making it happen!

This is knowledge based leadership development and not silly leadership based orator skills; this is leadership that synthesizing vision, conceptualized knowledge based leadership.

## **NEW VIRTUAL COMMUNITY NETWORK**

This human network was voicing public opinion for common good, knowledge and ideas and also becoming an electronic bridge among young budding minds and experienced engineers hierarchical structure.

As this knowledge will move through various departments and also beyond to clients, vendors thus creating more of new social knowledge and experiences. This is organizational knowledge creation. New leadership of upcoming generation will be nurtured based on these knowledge assets.

It will help people become the shadows or clones of the organization itself. It helps enhance the emotional intelligence of the people, brings in higher degree of unity of knowledge among the people, an organizational identity.

Communication in mission oriented data will create new knowledge that will not only drive the organization but also produce collaborative learning and working environment which creates new wealth or knowledge databank for the stake holders.

More knowledge is shared, more new knowledge is created. This would be just like referencing to past projects. Such organizational design will convert the physical space into dynamic place where we can share context and create new meanings, and develop individual heroics among teams, work groups and informal circles as well as in external dealings with clients and suppliers etc.

## **PARALLEL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

A concrete goal defined, we can create some mantras which for a code of conduct, standard behaviour that connects actions and processes. The connecting bridges of dialogues between virtual communities will become force that will drive people towards the strategic goal.

In my case, key was to translate what is important into posters and create understanding of what is important into easily understandable and relatable quote. It is the process of identifying, capturing, organizing and disseminating the intellectual quotes that are critical to organization's long term goal.

Strategic knowledge is the expertise and understanding that support the strategic direction of the organization. Although recognition and dissemination of knowledge is important but key for success is the degree to which principles of knowledge sharing is actively embraced by each member of the organization.

For Incentives on Culture Growth - Performance appraisals can include marks on knowledge sharing for people who collaborate towards organizational goals, encourage capable individuals to grow in the company and orient them towards new behaviour.

As the commercial values of knowledge and its consumption is being explored, it is important for India to become a knowledge based economy. Singapore for example is attempting to redefine itself as intelligent island. India must be able to attract and retain talented knowledge workers, if she wants to take up knowledge based leadership of the world from America; it means having knowledge based system about country's significant aspects.

We need such Human Engineering at National Level. Once knowledge priorities are defined, the organizational knowledge priority can be aligned with national knowledge strategies for creation of a more knowledgeable and better managed India.

In the name of making this world noble,  
Creating better India, by better thinking...

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