



CULTURAL ENGINEERING FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

“

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.

”

NITIN MENDIRATTA

nitinmendiratta@yahoo.com | www.mnitin.com
October 2010



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 staff truly behind her? Can modern technology help us translate innate potential of all employees towards corporate mission? I attempt to explore possibility of engineering and designing organizational culture to create, grow and manage the intellectual, spiritual and emotional energy of each employee for common purpose.

Can imitating someone else's corporate strategy/goals/vision 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. Available leadership programmes focus on system development but totally ignore the real cultural and leadership issues in work culture which must be considered.

Every country, religion, culture is based on some values, orientation and strategic direction. For America it is liberty, entrepreneurship, democracy and for Spiritual India, it is peace, love, truth and renunciation. There are so many temples in India, so many religious leaders, spiritual communities, satsang groups, align people, with their institutions, methods, procedures, art, literature and history are aligning people in direction of spiritualism, which has over the years become constituent of each one of us. Similarly, is it possible for organizations to develop a culture that orients people in organizational goal and vision? with certain values/qualities?

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? That philosophy?

Culture is based on (1) Values, (2) Beliefs and (3) Behaviour Norms (4) Economy (5) Environment (6) Larger Community Goals (7) Art (8) Entertainment (9) People (10) Communication. Organization Culture is observable at three levels behavior and artifacts, dress code, level of technology, way people greet and the physical layout of surroundings. The architectural design, work culture, infrastructure must have strong symbols, elements that showcase living vision moments of its brand, unique identity and its mission and vision.

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.

Cultural engineering is the art that alone realize audacious goals of the corporate. Cultural engineering aims to facilitate (1) Leadership Management (2) Knowledge Management (3) Developing Knowledge Culture (4) Create a Learning Organization (5) Progressive development (6) Create new assets. It is combination of IT Driven Governance with HR Development and Business Management.

First step is to theorise the organizational knowledge to build your own unique culture. Build a well expressed and logical long term plan for the intellectual assets of their company. Post documentation, this explicit knowledge will be categorized, transmitted, explained to concerned employees. This would help in (1) Change management and (2) Innovations and (3) The Strategic Management of your Global Leadership Goal. Second is to manifest your cultural philosophy, mission and vision in static and dynamic forms in work culture.

Organizational Knowledge can be converted into tangible products/services, once members of the community have access to the same. Key is to know which people hold the key to such knowledge, or have that additional drive or goal orientation. Make them knowledge leaders, evangelists, make e-communities into your work place, a parallel e-culture or e-communities working in your strategic direction of global leadership.

For Example, in my office, I noticed that a gentleman who always made it a point to use less of paper; used double sided printing and also recycled used paper. He probably irons his socks and keeps them in the little hanger they come with! I found his commitment towards Paper saving persistent and inspiring. In appreciation of which, I gave him a customized Poster with his name and important contribution/statistic of trees.

This recognition motivated and recognized his thoughtfulness. It gave him a unique identity of "paper police" and sort of evangelist for saving trees in the entire office community. Such ethical incentives and joy of recognition can strengthen faith of employees in goodness and nobility. This poster was the vision moment of that person that represented his unique style and thinking!

I respectfully gifted some more custom designed Table Top Frames to some wonderful people with 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. This tapped their personal philosophy, thinking, individuality, abilities and untapped potential. 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!

Similarly by intelligent designing, recognition and rewarding one can channelize the individual heroics with common good that is in alignment with organization's mission. Once individual's intellect is stimulated by honest and genuine recognition, people appreciate it and take a step forward to make a somewhere in the organization, somewhere in the world in the value change of organization and the world.

There was no secret engineering. To ensure that my personality did not influence this token giving or that I ensured not to even indirectly obtain any favour from and tried not to disclose my identity and purpose.

I identified characters/leaders with open mind for new thinking. I carefully placed the static designs according to their abilities to propagated new thoughts that will be pillars for new virtual structure required for the unified social cognition engine. To further stimulate collective social conscious, I designed and distributed 150+ e-cards on the theme of "Spirit of Engineers", "New Age Management Mantras", "Art and Engineering", focussing on "Mission" more and "Management" less. These positive suggestions helped promoting dialogue, discussion and consensus on the common goal. I was helping this new knowledge generation cycle by identifying, capturing, organizing and disseminating the intellectual quotes that are critical to organization's long term goal.

What is impressive about e-cards or 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

and a higher level of understanding. Initially it was a zig-zag process but it created a cycle that was more powerful, as people around were willingly externalizing and internalizing the new knowledge obtained by developed through a cyclic and dynamic process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

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. As this knowledge will move through various departments and also beyond to clients, vendors thus creating more of new social knowledge and experiences. These dynamos of virtual community will drive the future through their intelligence and knowledge bank.

Daily gossips were changing into new knowledge discussion. Mission was getting socialized. People were actualizing it through their action, thinking and reflection. As change agent, I was facilitating learning as a knowledge leader for a large number of people. Not like a forceful boss but through indirect, truthful and honest means of offering my truths (Satyagraha). These post cards and letters were also becoming the social glue as well as the change agents for new internal brand, a new social identity.

Similarly through circulation of a kind of knowledge you can obtain likeminded people and make their virtual groups for a particular organizational objective. Just like people make yahoo/google groups and forward messages like jokes, or news articles from internet to their friends and likeminded people; Idea is to create knowledge hubs which will coordinate, distribute, various important knowledge on efforts of organization in a particular sphere. This will create a virtual community based on common interest who can share their insights to develop better solutions to problems faced. People who recognize value of knowledge will themselves volunteer to be part of this knowledge sharing and this will build capacity of each employee as they know that promoting knowledge sharing as emphasised as core competency in your company. Group member will have knowledge advantage over other employees.

This virtual knowledge group is full of title less, leaders beyond the hierarchical structure of company working to build new knowledge, new ideas and strategies, identifying creative solutions, collecting data and sharing information etc. Their knowledge will help in future knowledge planning, facilitate knowledge culture, bring in collaborative

opportunities, networked community support, and help set knowledge strategy, framework of corporate strategy and organizational analysis of core competencies. Such socialization can speed the real world cultural formation through sharing of emotions, ideas and bring in sense of direction to an otherwise uncontrolled, complex and multilayered culture of employee morale, commitment and hard work.

This is not mind control or brain washing 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.

Even Success of State of the Art IT Systems is dependent upon people. Organization should be viewed as network of human computers. People are your technology. Identify capable people in your organization that will be the vehicle, the driving force of your global mission. 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.

Every company has its hardware and software of its social structure. Software is the conceptual system, the theory or philosophy that backs the hardware or administrative hierarchy. These e-bridges of virtual groups can guide and awaken the unmanaged social cognition engine of community. In addition to communicating new concepts and ideas, if virtual community is about a 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.

Like Individuals, organizations also need to create and re-create themselves. We should see ourselves for what they can become and not what they are now. Challenge is to bring that required change and upgrade the system through people and with people in a way that faces least resistance from staff. For Incentives on Growth of this e-culture - Performance appraisals can include marks on knowledge sharing, collaborating initiatives towards

organizational goals, encourage new staff and orienting them towards new behaviour.

Organizational Leaders are not those people who direct and discipline their own performance through work/feedback of their colleagues and juniors. Organizational leaders are those individuals who can drive the knowledge of the company, for the company and by the company. This is knowledge based leadership development and not a public speaking skill or ability to play office polity or manipulate things through pressure tactics. This is true leadership that is obtained by synthesizing vision for one strategic direction.

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. In e-community, each person has become craftsman of his knowledge subject, an artist of his passion, and he himself transfers his knowledge to their children and young generation.

Virtual Knowledge communities will be the tools for steering strategic direction of the entire organization's intellect. They will be small clones of organization directly powered by the intelligence of the knowledge community, which will not only drive organizational forward but also create unique identity for each group, by promoting collaborative learning and working environment which creates new wealth or knowledge databank for the stake holders. In an informal circle, more knowledge is shared, more new knowledge is created about say... past projects or about product/service or external dealings with clients, vendors etc.

Once knowledge priorities are defined, the organizational knowledge priority can be aligned with national knowledge strategies for creation of a more knowledgeable and better strategic management of India.

We need such Human Engineering at National Level. As the commercial values of knowledge and its consumption is being explored, in forms of copy rights, patents etc. It is important for India to become a knowledge based economy, a knowledge driven country. 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.

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